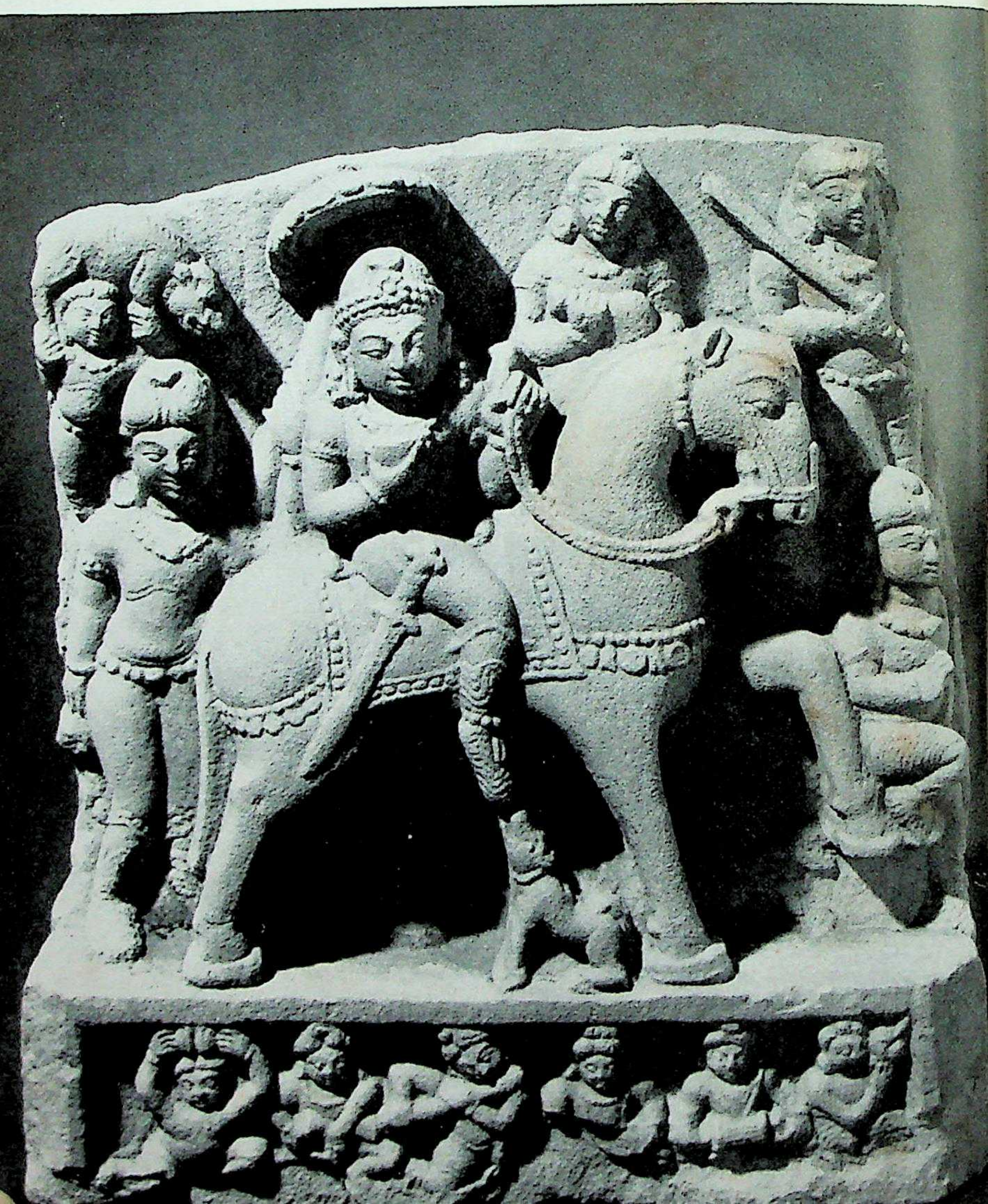
ICONOGRAPHY OF REVANTA

B N SHARMA

Frontispiece



ICONOGRAPHY OF REVANTA

BRIJENDRA NATH SHARMA
M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt.
Keeper, National Museum
New Delhi

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ततो गच्छेन्महादेवि राजभट्टारकं परम् ।
रैवन्तकं सूर्यपुत्रमश्वारूढं महाबलम् ॥
संस्थितं क्षेत्रमध्ये तु सावित्र्या नैर्ऋते प्रिये ।
तं दृष्ट्वा मानवो देवि सर्वापद्भ्यो विमुच्यते ॥
रविवारेण सप्तम्यां यस्तं पूजयते नरः ।
तस्याऽन्वयेऽपि नो देवि दरिद्रो जायते नरः ॥
तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन तमेवाराधयेन्मनाक् ।
निर्विघ्नं क्षेत्रवासार्थं राजा वाऽश्वविवृद्धये ॥

—*Skanda Purāṇa, Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa*
164, 1-4

To

Padmaśrī **C. Sivaramamurti**
with profound respect and devotion

FOREWORD

Dr. Brijendra Nath Sharma, who has already established his reputation by his Indological, particularly iconographic studies, has now produced a monograph on Revanta, one of the minor divinities of the Brāhmaṇical pantheon. Images of Revanta, invariably on horseback, were often wrongly identified as those of Buddha on his way to the Renunciation, or of Kalki, the last incarnation of Vishṇu While such mistaken identifications have now been corrected, there has been till now no comprehensive research on Revanta, based on all available material —literary, epigraphic and sculptural. Dr. Sharma's monograph is the first attempt—an entirely successful one—in this direction and is therefore welcome.

The material collected by Dr. Sharma shows that while all classes of the sources of information mentioned above agree on the equestrian aspect of Revanta, each class emphasizes different qualities of the god. Thus, literature, apart from bestowing on him the usual attributes common to all gods, would regard him as the protector against the terrors of forests and other lonely places and of enemies and robbers. Inscriptions lay stress on his qualities as a handsome horseriding hero. Finally, images of Revanta generally depict him as a hunting prince with a hunting retinue. These not mutually exclusive qualities reveal the full nature of the god.

Dr. Sharma, contrary to the views of previous scholars, also shows that Revanta images are not unknown in the southern part of India, though they are probably absent in Tamil Nadu.

I have much pleasure in recommending this monograph to scholars and the public.

A. GHOSH
Former Director General
Archaeological Survey of India

New Delhi
September 4, 1975

PREFACE

Revanta is comparatively a less known god in the realm of Hindu iconography. Though several literary works and epigraphs have described the iconographic features of his image and also given the mode of his worship, he could not gain a suitable place in the galaxy of numerous Hindu gods on whom so much has been written by different scholars.

Revanta is not mentioned in the epics and also other literary works earlier than the Gupta period. The *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* of Varāhamihira, which belongs to the Gupta period, is probably the earliest work, describing the iconography of an image of Revanta. Similarly, the *Vishṇu Purāṇa* and the *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, which are also of almost the same period, furnish us with some very interesting details about Revanta. The earliest sculptures of Revanta discovered from several places in Northern India also belong to the Gupta period. Thus, it is evident that the worship of this solar divinity came into vogue in the Gupta period, c. 5th century A.D., and several images of the god were fashioned by the artists for being worshipped by the devouts.

That the worship of Revanta became popular during the mediaeval period is attested by his mention in the contemporary literature and epigraphs and also by the finds of numerous images almost all over India.

Dr. N.K. Bhattasali in his *Catalogue of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum* and Dr. J.N. Banerjea in his *Development of Hindu Iconography* have discussed some images of Revanta, but they are mainly from Eastern India. A few other images of the god from Northern India have also been published in articles during the recent years.

The present monograph is an attempt to bring together the relevant material which could easily be culled from various literary and archaeological sources. It has four chapters. The first chaper gives an account of the god as given in different religious and secular literature. The second chapter is devoted to Revanta's mention in various epigraphic records and the third gives a succinct account of the images of Revanta including several hitherto unknown ones from different parts of India. The fourth chapter contains a brief resumé of the matter discussed in the earlier chapters. A number of photographs have been added in the end for a comparative study of the images fashioned during the centuries. It is hoped that the monograph will prove useful to the students of Indian art and iconography.

I am deeply obliged to Padmaśrī A. Ghosh for his valuable help in the preparation of this monograph and also for contributing a valuable Foreword for it. I also owe my sincere thanks to Prof. K.D. Bajpai and Prof. Upendra Thakur for kindly giving their opinions about this work. I am also thankful to Dr. V.P. Dwivedi, Dr. B.C. Chakravorty, Dr. M.I. Khan and my elder brother Śrī Y.N. Sharma for offering some useful suggestions.

I should like to express my heart-felt thanks to Dr. Maurizio Taddei, Dr. P. Pal, Dr. V.R. Nambiar, Dr. Greig Davidson, Dr. W. Zwalf, Dr. Joanna Williams, Dr. F. Kussmaul, Dr. H.R. Gaudani, Śrī R.C. Agrawala, Śrī M.A. Dhaky, Dr. N.P. Joshi, Śrī R.C. Sharma, Dr. M.P. Joshi, Śrī D.K. Handa and Śrī C.M. Srivastava for kindly supplying me photographs for the book. My cordial thanks are also due to Śrī S.P. Nanda and Śrī N. Shah for preparation of several photographs of Revanta and also to Śrī B. Sahi for his prompt and earnest help for the completion of my work. To Śrī H.K. Chaturvedi, my thanks are due for preparing the index.

Lastly, I thank Śrī Shakti Malik for publishing the monograph in such a pleasing form.

B.N. SHARMA

National Museum
New Delhi
15th August, 1975

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CHAPTER I

REVANTA IN LITERATURE

Revanta, mythologically the son of Sūrya and Sañjñā and king of the Guhyakas, is one of the most important minor deities of Hinduism. The stone images of the god found so far are invariably two-armed and show him riding on a caparisoned horse, sometimes accompanied by a hunting party. In the beginning of this century when such sculptures discovered from Bihar were added to the archaeological galleries of the Indian Museum, Calcutta, they were wrongly identified as the images of Kalki—the future incarnation of Vishṇu. But unlike Revanta the images of Kalki are generally shown as a single figure in the Daśāvatāra panels or on the back-frame of a Vishṇu image riding on a horse and holding a sword in his uplifted right hand. The dogs, pigs, musicians and the attendants which are generally shown in the sculptures of Revanta are invariably absent in the images of Kalki. Pandit B.B. Bidyabinod quoting a verse from Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* (ch. 58, v. 56) had correctly identified the above so-called images of Kalki as that of Revanta.

Sometimes, the images of Revanta were also mistaken for the sculptures depicting the scene of the great renunciation (*mahābhinishkramaṇa*) of the Buddha, when prince Siddhārtha had left the capital city of Kapilavastu on his horse Kanthaka preceded by the charioteer Chhandaka. But in such sculptures the dwarfs usually hold the hoofs of Kanthaka and again the hunting scene (*mṛgayā*), which is a characteristic feature in the images of Revanta, is conspicuous by its absence. Besides these, in a few reliefs, the image of Revanta was wrongly identified as Bhairava or a prince engaged in the royal sport of hunting in which revelries were indulged into.

A number of literary works provide useful information about the birth of Revanta, his iconography and also the wide popularity of his worship in India. But the *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa* (ch. 9) and the *Narasiṁha Purāṇa* (ch. 18), which give detailed descriptions of Sūrya's family and his children, do not refer to Revanta, from which it appears that he was not regarded to be a very important deity by all the early *Purāṇa* writers. His name as one of the sons of Sūrya occurs in the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, the *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, etc.

In the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*,[1] Parāśara narrates to Maitreya the following story about the birth of Revanta. "Sañjñā, the daughter of Viśvakarmā, was the wife of Sun, and bore him three children, the Manu (Vaivasvata), Yama and the goddess Yamī (or the Yamunā river). Unable to endure the fervours of her lord, Sañjñā gave him Chhāyā as his handmaid,[2] and repaired to the forests to practise devout exercises. The Sun, having mistaken Chhāyā to be his wife Sañjñā, begot by her three other children, Śanaiśchara (Saturn), another Manu (Sāvarṇi), and a daughter Tapatī (the Tāpatī river). Chhāyā on one occasion, being offended with Yama, the son of Sañjñā, denounced an imprecation upon him, and thereby revealed to Yama and to the Sun that she was not actual Sañjñā, the mother of the former.

Being further informed by Chhāyā, that his wife had gone to the wilderness, the Sun beheld Sañjñā by the eye of meditation engaged in austerities, in the figure of a mare (in the region of Uttara Kuru)· Metamorphosing himself into a horse, he rejoined his wife, and begot three other children, the two Aśvins and Revanta, and then brought Sañjñā back to his own dwelling."

The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*,[3] adds some more details about Revanta's birth : "Sūrya concentrating his thoughts, beheld his wife in the form of a mare, unassailable by all created beings by reason of her austerities and self-repression And going to the Northern Kurus, the Sun became a horse and approached her (fig. 1).[4] And she beholding him approaching, because of her fear of a strange male, went face to face with him, being intent on guarding her rear. And thereupon, they joined their noses, when they both met there, and his glory passed from the Sun's two nostrils into the mare. Two gods were begotten there, the two Aśvins, who are the two best physicians, namely, Nāsatya and Dasra, the two sons who issued forth from the mare's mouth; these two are indeed the sons of Mārtaṇḍa, while he bore a horse's form. And at the termination of the flow of his semen was born Revanta, holding a sword and a bow, clad in armour, riding on horseback, and carrying arrows and a quiver."

Sūrya appointed Revanta to the lordship over the Guhyakas and said, "Thou shalt indeed be worthy of worship by the entire world, my child; and mortals, who shall call thee to mind amid the terrors of forests and other lonely places, of great conflagrations, of enemies and robbers, shall be delivered out of great calamity. Comfort, intelligence, happiness, kingship, perfect health, fame, exalted position—these, when worshipped and well satisfied, thou shalt bestow on men."[5]

Some other *Purāṇas*[6] also refer to Revanta in different contexts. The *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, which mentions that the four sons of Sūrya, namely, Revanta, Yama and the two Manus should be placed on his two sides,[7] also states that Revanta should be shown on the back of a horse like the Sun :

> *pṛshṭhe-śve sūryavat kāryo revantaścha tathā prabhuḥ/*
>
> —*Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, III, 70, 5

While the *Bhavishya Purāṇa* says :

> *Revanto nāma yo-rkasya rūpeṇārkasamaḥ sutaḥ/*
>
> —*Bhavishya Purāṇa*, 79, 78

In the *Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, Lord Śiva emphasizes the worship of Revanta and relates to his consort Umā that after performing certain *pūjā*, etc., one must have a dedicated glance (*darśana*) of the *Rājyabhaṭṭāraka* Revanta seated on horseback, as by doing so one will be free from all the evils and attain religious merit.[8]

The *Kālikā Purāṇa*[9] lays down that "kings should worship Revanta at the gates according to the principles of Sun worship. His image should be placed on a white horse with his hair fastened by a cloth. The deity should be dressed in a coat of mail and should carry a sword in his right hand and a whip in the left." The *Agni Purāṇa*[10] calls him "a horseman."

Besides the *Purāṇas*, some other literary works also refere to Revanta and his worship. Varāhamihira mentions Revanta as riding on horseback with attendants in the sport of hunting :

Revanto aśvārūḍho mṛgayākriḍādiparivāraḥ|
—*Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, 58, 56

Contrary to this, Hemādri does not refer to his hunting party, but simply states :

pṛshthasthaḥ sūryavat kāryo revantaścha tatha prabhuḥ|
—*Chaturvargachintāmaṇi*, *Vratakhaṇḍa*, p. 137

Jayānaka[11] in his *Pṛthvīrāja Vijaya* mentions Revanta, Sugrīva, Karṇa and Vaivasvata, etc., as the sons of Sūrya. Uddyotana Sūri[12] in his famous work *Kuvalayamālā Kathā* tells us that "Revanta, son of Sūrya and Sañjñā, and the king of the Guhyakas, delivers people from the terrors of forests and other lonely places, of great conflagrations, of enemies and robbers, and bestows upon his worshippers comfort, intelligence, happiness, kingship, perfect health, fame and exalted position."

The *Śabda-kalpa-druma*,[13] which also relates to Revanta as the son of Sūrya and Sañjñā, and the lord of the Guhyakas, relates that, "on the 7th day of the performance of the Nirājana ceremony (a kind of military and religious ceremony observed by kings or generals of armies in the month of *Āśvina* before marching to the field), after worshipping Sūrya, Revanta, his son, is to be worshipped in the interior of the outer gateway either by preparing his image or drawing his picture on an earthen jar in the following manner : Revanta with two muscular arms, shining with armour, his hair covered with a piece of white cloth, bearing a whip in his left, and an intensely sharp-edged sword in his right hand, and seated on a white horse"

Raghunandana in his *Tithitattva* quotes a line from the *Kalpataru*, which is said to have been taken from the *Brahma Purāṇa*. It refers to the worship of

Revanta (on the full moon day of *Āśvina*) :

pujyaḥ sāśvaiścha revanto yathāvibhavavistaraiḥ|
—*Tithitattva*, p. 690

It will be interesting to note that Nakula, the fourth of the Pāṇḍava brothers, is said to have compiled *Aśvaśāstram*, a work on horses, with the help of all the texts of the sage Śālihotra, the first and foremost exponent of the branch of knowledge among human beings. In one of the chapters of this work a few verses are given in praise of Raivata (Revanta), the divine master of horses. These verses claim that if a person chants at dawn every day the 28 names of the god mentioned by him, one could protect one's horses from evil spirits.[14] The 28 names are : 1. Raivata, 2. Pārthiva, 3. Vīra, 4 Mātṛkolāhala, 5. Aruṇa, 6. Pañchagrīva, 7. Aśvapurusha, 8. Piṇḍakī, 9. Hayavāhaka, 10. Sūryaputra, 11. Mahāsvāmī, 12 Chhāyāhṛdayanandana, 13. Nāradānandakārī, 14. Hṛdayajña, 15. Raṇapriya, 16. Bhāsvān, 17. Ratnāvatībhartā, 18. Nirbhaya, 19. Bhayavighnahā, 20. Bhūteśa, 21. Tarjana, 22. Bhadra, 23. Bhūteśa, 24. Bhaktavatsala, 25. Ārogyasmaraṇa, 26. Vaidya, 27. Sarvarakshākara, and 28. Śiva.

The name of Revanta is also famous as an author of a treatise on the rearing of horses and the treatment of their diseases. Abhinavachandra (c. 14th century A.D.) of Bāgavāḍi, the son of Kāḷapayya and Attimabbe mentions that he followed the earlier works of Revanta and Siṁhadatta in composing his own Kannaḍa poetical work *Aśvavaidya*.[15]

Various types of religious and secular literature at our disposal brings it home that no extant work prior to the Gupta period (c. 5th century A.D.)

has mentioned anything about Revanta. The *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, the *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa* and the *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, which are regarded as the compositions of the Gupta period, provide quite interesting details about the birth and iconography of this deity. It would not be out of place to state that it was during the Gupta period that many of the existing iconographic forms were standardised and several new types of icons of various divinities including Revanta were evolved.

It appears from the mediaeval literature that the worship of Revanta had gained popularity by that time all over Northern India. As the deity was the bestower of happiness and success, he was equally worshipped by all classes of people for gaining physical and spiritual benefits. Like other gods, some special days and ceremonies were also prescribed for his worship. Moreover, as he was the divine master of the horses, his worship was specially done for the protection and care of one's own horses.

NOTES

1. Wilson, H.H., *The Vishṇu Purāṇa*, pp. 214-15.
Sūryasya patnī sañjñābhūttanayā viśvakarmaṇah /
Manuryamo yamī chaiva tadapatyāni vai mune //
Asahantī tu sā bhartustejaśchhāyāṁ yuyoja vai /
Bhartṛśuśrūshaṇe-raṇyaṁ svayaṁ cha tapase yayau //
Sañjñeyamityathārkaścha chhāyāyāmātmajatrayam /
Śanaiścharaṁ manuṁ chānyaṁ tapatīṁ chāpyajījanat //
Chhāyāsañjñā dadau śāpaṁ yamāya kupitā yadā /
Tadānyeyamasau buddhirityāsīdyamasūryayoḥ //
Tato vivasvānākhyāte tayaivāraṇyasaṅsthitām /
Samādhidṛshṭyā dadṛśe tāmaśvāṁ tapasi sthitām //
Vājirūpadharaḥ so-tha tasyāṁ devāvathāśvinau /
Janayāmāsa revantaṁ retaso-nte cha bhāskaraḥ //
—*Vishṇu Purāṇa*, III, 2, 2-7

2. According to the *Matsya Purāṇa*, Vivasvat, the son of Kaśyapa and Aditi, had three wives, Rājñī, the daughter of Raivata, by whom he had Revanta; Prabhā, by whom he had Prabhāta; and by Sañjñā, the daughter of Tvashṭri, Manu, Yama and Yamunā. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 215, n. 1.

3. Pargiter, F.E., *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, CVIII, p. 575.
Vapurdadhāra mārtaṇḍaḥ sarvāvayavaśobhanam /
Sa dadaśa samādhisthaḥ svāṁ bhāryyāṁ vaḍavākṛtim //
Adhṛshyāṁ sarvabhūtānāṁ tapasā niyanena cha /
Uttarāṁścha kurūn gatvā bhūtvāśvo-bhānurāgamat //
Sā cha dṛshṭvā tamāyāntaṁ parapuṁso viśaṅkayā /
Jagāma saṁmukhe tasya pṛshṭharakshaṇatatparā //
Tataścha nāsikāyogaṁ tayostatra sametayoḥ /
Vaḍavāyāṁ cha tattejo nāsikābhyāṁ vivasvataḥ //
Devau tatra samutpannāvaśvinau bhishajāṁ varau /
Nāsatyadasrau tanayāvaśvinakṛādvinirgatau //
Mārtaṇḍasya sutāvetāvaśvarūpadharasya hi /
Retaso-nte cha revantaḥ khaḍgī dhanvī tanutradhṛk //
Aśvārūḍhaḥ samudbhūto bāṇatūṇasamanvitaḥ /
—*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, 105, 6-12

The same story is repeated in this *Purāṇa* with a slight difference and it states that when the seed came to an end, Revanta was produced, armed with a sword, clad in leather, wearing armour, mounted on a horse and equipped with arrows and a quiver :

Retaso-nte cha revantaḥ khaḍgī charmī tanutradhṛk |
Aśvārūḍhaḥ samudbhūto bāṇa-tūṇasamanvitaḥ ||
—*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, 75, 24

4. On the right of the horse-bodied Sūrya stands Kaśyapa and Tvashṭā and on the left of Sañjñā are the figures of the two Aśvins, namely, Nāsatya and Dasra and the sage Chyavana.

5. Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 576.
Guhyakādhipatitve cha revanto viniyojitaḥ ||
Evamapyāha cha tato bhagavāṁllokabhāvitaḥ |
Tvamapyaśeshalokasya pūjyo vatsa bhavishyasi ||
Araṇyādimahādāvavairidasyubhayeshu cha |
Tvāṁ smarishyanti ye martyā mokshyante te mahāpadaḥ ||
Kshemaṁ buddhiṁ sukhaṁ rājyamārogyaṁ kīrtimunnatim |
Narāṇāṁ paritushṭastvaṁ pūjitaḥ saṁpradā syāsi ||
—*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, 105, 20-23

6. Cf. *Sāmba upa-Purāṇa*, 29-13.
7. *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, III (ed.), Shah, P., 67, 9.
8. *Skanda Purāṇa, Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa*, 164, 1-4.
9 *Kālikā Purāṇa*, 85, 46-49.
10. Bhattasali, N.K., *The Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, p. 175.
11 *Pṛthvīrāja Vijaya*, canto 1.
12. *Kuvalayamālā Kathā*, p. 68. See also Sharma, D., *Rājasthān Through the Ages*, I, p. 393.
13. Bhandarkar, D.R., *Progress Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, Western Circle*, 1903-04, p. 30, note.
14. *Raivataḥ pārthivo vīro mātṛkolāhalo-ruṇaḥ |*
Pañchagrīvo-śvapurushaḥ piṇḍakī hayavāhakaḥ ||
Sūryaputro mahāsvāmī chhāyāhṛdayanandanaḥ |
Nāradānandakārī cha hṛdayajño raṇapriyaḥ ||
Bhāsvān ratnāvatībhartā nirbhayo bhayavighnahā |
Bhūteśastarjano bhadro bhūteśo bhaktavatsalaḥ ||
Ārogyasmaraṇo vaidyaḥ sarvarakshākaraḥ śivaḥ |
Yaḥ kaśchiditi nāmāni ashṭāviṁśati saṁkhyayā ||

Aruṇodayavelāyām̐ nidrāyāḥ susamāhitaḥ /
Tasyāśvānām̐ na tu bhayam̐ dosho bhūtairūpadravaḥ //
Sahavittardhivibhavairyaśobhirabhivardhate /
Anyaḥ ko-pi paṭhedbhaktyā vāñchhitam̐ tasya sidhyati //
—*Aśvaśāstram*, p. 7, vv. 1-6

15. *Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department for the year 1916,* Bangalore, 1917, p. 92.

CHAPTER II

REVANTA IN EPIGRAPHS

A number of epigraphs from different parts of India mention Revanta in different contexts. It will be interesting to note that "Revanta" was regarded as an honoured title and was affixed to the names of the knights as an attribute. It is evident from the Hulgur inscription of Vikramāditya VI dated Śaka Saṁvat 999 (1077 A.D.) that the noble *Mahāsāmanta* Jayakesiyarasa was regarded as "Revanta of Kali Age" : "*Kali-yuga-Reva*(*n*)*ta*(*ṁ*)..."[1]

An inscription of the Kalachurya Bhillama dated in 1189 A.D., found at Mutgi, while describing the great titles of a person of rank refers to him as "a Revanta of noble rank riding on most froward steeds" :

> ...*ativiśa*(*sha*)*ma-hay-ārūḍha-prauḍha-rekhā-Revaṁtaṁ*/
>
> --*Epi. Indica*, XV, p. 36.l.40

Similarly, a Telugu inscription of Śaka Saṁvat 1052 (1130 A.D.) incised on a pillar in the Mūlasthāneśvara temple at Nādeṇḍla, which describes the great qualities of Erra-Maṇḍa, also states him as "a Revanta in (*the management of*) horses."[2]

Revanta has also been mentioned in Kolur inscription of the reign of Siṅghaṇa, *i.e.*, Yādava Siṅghaṇa (c. 1210-46 A.D.). A minister of this king has been referred to as "a Revanta of magnificent type among those who ride most forward horses."[3]

A Canarese stone inscription (1125 A.D.) of the time of Vikramāditya VI and the Kadamba Jayakeśin II, engraved on the right of a temple of Mallikārjuna at Kumbapur, a hamlet of Narendra, states that "when the whole world praised him as he rode upon the lordly horse of the exceedingly difficult literary sentiments, as though he were a Revanta, truly the *Daṇḍanāyaka* Siṁha was a skilful man, an ornament of generals" :

Ativishama-rasa-turaṁgama patiyaṁ Revaṁtan-
aṁt-ir-er̤alu sakaḷa-kshiti pogaḷutt-ire senāpati-
tiḷakaṁ Siṁha-daṇḍanāthane ballaṁ/
—*Epi. Indica*, XIII, p. 306, v. 49

An inscription (of about 1153 A.D.) at Ablur belonging to the time of the Western Chāḷukya king Taila III mentions his feudatory, the *Mahāsāmantādhipati*, Mahadevarasa, "a very Revanta with horses", *i.e.*, '*Turaya-Revantaṁ*.'[4]

A Śilāhāra grant of 1058 A.D. describes Mārasiṁha as "*Revanto Vatsarājo vara-turaga-chay-ārūḍha-rekhā-viśuddhau*", *i.e.*, "a very Revanta, and a very Vatsarāja, in the exact determination of who might be the most eminent among those who are mounted on troops of excellent horses"[5]

Another equally interesting reference to Revanta is found in an inscription dated in Kalachuri *Saṁvat* 893 (1141-42 A.D.) at Harihar, which states :

grahaṇa-nirgata-preraṇa-lagna-stā(sthā)-pan-oll-
aḷita-sādi-sū(chana ?)-sū(śū)-kaḷa sapti-saṁkuḷa-
grāhita-paṁchadhārā-prapañcha-saṁcharaṇach-
aturatara-surekhā-Revantanuṁ/
—*PSOC*,[6] Ins. No. 125, 1.47

Halebid inscription of the reign of the Hoysaḷa king Ballāḷa II (1173-1220 A.D.) refers to a general named Chenna Kāḷama-Sāhaṇi as a "Revanta in horsemanship."[7]

An inscription of the reign of the Hoysaḷa king Narasiṁha III (1254-1291 A.D.) at the village Honnagaṭṭa in Hassan district in Karnatak compares the illustrious Mahāpasāyta Ghaṇṭeya Singa, as "a bold Revanta versed in riding the most vicious horses" :

> *...svasti śrīman mahā-pasāytaṁ ativiśama hayārūḍha-prauḍha-rekhā-Revaṁtaṁ..*/[8]

An inscription of Śaka Saṁvat 1205 (1284 A.D.) found in Holuguḍḍe village in Karehaḷḷi Hubli mentions one Tammarasa as a "Revanta in riding over an even unruly horse" :

> *...ati-viśama-hayārūḍha-prauḍha-rekhā-Revantanuṁ...*/[9]

Sheorinārāyaṇa statue inscription of the Kalachuri year 898 (1146 A.D.) mentions a warrior Saṅgrāmasiṁha, "who is like (Revanta) the son of the Sun in (*riding*) horses."[10]

Similarly, Pujaripali stone inscription of Gopāladeva (Kalachuri) datable to c. 12th century A.D., which mentions Gopāla as resembling the god of love in handsome form and is like Śūdraka in valour also says that, "he appears in every place mounted on a horse like Revanta" :

> *'hayārūḍho Revanta iva dṛśyate*/[11]

The Akaltara stone inscription of Kalachuri king Ratnadeva II mentions the construction of a temple of Revanta at Vikarṇapur (modern Kotgadh, M.P.) in Kalachuri Saṁvat 893 (1141-42 A.D.).[12] The epigraph says that Vallabharāja, a feudatory chief of Ratnadeva II, "provided the earth with this ornament in the guise of a temple of Revanta, (*which is*) an object of enjoyment to the eyes.... Spreading his exceedingly white fame by constructing (*this*) wonderful work of the best temple of the son of the seven-horses (*saptāśva*, *i.e.*, Sun), he has now surprised even the glorious Viśvakarmā together with the proud people rich in fame" :[13]

> *Tenedamābharaṇamārachitaṁ pṛthivyāḥ pṛthvīpaterni japatermahishīti matvā Revantamandiramishānnayanopabhogyaṁ bha(ktyo) pacharachature(ṇa) yaśodhanena/*
> *(sa)ptāśva(sūnu) bhavanottamachitrakarmanirmāṇataḥ suviśadāṁ kiratā cha kīrttiṁ/*
> *tenādhunā saha yaśodhanamānilokairvismāpitaḥ sa bhagavānapi viśvakarmā//*
> *i(ho) pavā (bā) hyāli vilāsa(ve)-sma(śma)no vi(chitrakarmonnata) muttamaṁ dha(nai)ḥ/*
> *achī(kha) nachchārūśa(sa) rojarājitaṁ sa cha trilokīmukuraṁ śa(sa) rovaraṁ//*
>
> —*CII*, IV, ii, pp. 431-32, vv. 22-23

Ratanpur stone inscription of Pṛthvīdeva II dated in Kalachuri year 910 (1158-59 A.D.) also informs us that Vallabharāja caused to be made on the outskirts of Vikarṇapur a temple containing an image of Revanta (*Revantamūrtikulaṁ*).[14]

Vanthali inscription dated in Saṁvat 1346 *varshe vaiśākhavadi 6 Some* (Monday, 17th April, 1290 A.D) proves the worship of Revanta in Gujarat and Kathiawar region. The inscription which begins with a salutation to Revanta records that a *raṇastambha* bearing the image of Revanta was installed at Vāmanasthalī. It further informs us that a unique *maṇḍapa* was also caused to be made in honour of Revanta, the son of *Sahasradhamna* (*i.e.*, Sun) :

> *Oṁ namaḥ śrīrēvantāya..... tanmūrtiyuktaṁ. ... raṇastambhamidaṁ vyadhāt//*
> *Sahasradhāmnastanujanmanaḥ śrīrēvantanāmnaḥ purato navīnaḥ/*

achīkaranmaṇḍapamadvitīyamaho mahāsādhanikaḥ sa eshaḥ//[15]

It is surprising that in spite of Revanta's mention in literature and depiction in plastic art of the Gupta period, no contemporary epigraph mentions the deity in any context. Similarly, excepting the Kalachuris, the inscriptions of other dynasties, who ruled in different parts of North India during the mediaeval period, have not referred to anything significant about the popularity of worship of this god. Further, a careful perusal of the epigraphic material discussed above reveals that leaving a few of them which specifically mention the construction of the temples of Revanta in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, others generally glorify their nobles by comparing them with this equestrian god. It can thus be inferred that the deity was gaining popularity as a warrior-god Findspots of the inscriptions reveal that the deity was popular in South and Central India, but was practically unknown in North and North-West India. Epigraphs also confirm Revanta's association with horses.

NOTES

1. *Epi. Indica*, XVI, p. 330, l. 11.
2. *Ibid.*, VI, p. 275.
3. *Ibid.*, XIX, p. 195, l. 17.
4. *Ibid.*, V, p. 236, l. 10.
5. *Cave Temple Inscriptions* (No. 10 of the Brochures of the Archaeological Survey of Western India), p. 102.
6. Fleet, J.F., *Pali Sanscrit and Old Canarese Inscriptions from the Bombay Presidency and Part of the Madras Presidency*, London, 1898.
7. *Annual Report, Archaeological Survey of Mysore for the year 1941*, Mysore, 1942, p. 151.
8. *Ibid., for the year 1937*, Bangalore, 1938, p. 127, vv. 22-23.
9. *Annual Report of the Archaeological Department of Mysore for the year 1922*, Bangalore, 1922, p. 76, v. 4.
10. Mirashi, V.V., *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, IV, II, p. 584, v. 2.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 592, v. 41.
12. *Epi. Indica*, XXVI, p. 258, note 5; Mirashi, V.V., *op. cit.*, p. 433, vv. 21-22, pl. LXVIII; *Progress Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, Western Circle*, Poona, 1903-04, pp. 29-30.
13. Mirashi, V.V., *op. cit.*, pp. 435-36.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 499, l. 24.
15. Bhandarkar, D.R., *List of the Inscriptions of Northern India in Brahmi and its derivative scripts, from about 200 B.C.* (Appendix to *Epi. Indica and Records of the Archaeological Survey of India*, XIX to XXIII), p. 89, No. 624 : Vanthali (Kathiawar) inscription of the times of the (Chaulukya) M. Sāragṁadeva and the Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Vijayānandadeva of Vāmanasthalī. Transcribed by D.B. Diskalkar in the *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Poona, V, p. 174, note.

CHAPTER III

REVANTA IN ART

Revanta though not a very popular god has yet found a plentiful depiction in Indian art. The available sculptures of the god are mainly of two types. In the first variety, he is shown as a single figure, riding on a horseback and attended by his attendants. In the second variety, the deity is shown in the centre as above, but preceded and succeeded by the horseriders, who may be identified as Daṇḍa and Piṅgala. The *Bhavishya Purāṇa*[1] gives a detailed account of these two figures and they are also shown in almost all the sculptures of Sūrya particularly of the mediaeval period. As Revanta is the son of Sūrya, it is not surprising that his two attendants are also sometimes shown with him particularly when he is going for hunting in a forest.

The earliest representation of Revanta in art is found in the images of the Gupta period, 5th-6th century A.D., discovered at Nagarī (Chittor, Rajasthan), Newal (Unnao, Uttar Pradesh), Jahangira hill (Bhagalpur, Bihar), Pachar (Gaya, Bihar), etc.

The headless image at Nagarī worshipped as *Sāḍu Mātā* really represents Revanta riding on his caparisoned horse (fig. 2). His left hand is pulling the bridle, while the right holds a cup. An attendant holds an umbrella over him. The deity is accompanied by his attendants. The sculpture lying in the open is badly damaged. One dog is shown near his right foot. It has been assigned to the Gupta period, 5th century A.D.[2]

A Gupta sculpture of Revanta found at Newal has been acquired by the National Museum, New Delhi (No. 71.268; ht. 52.5 cms; fig. 3). His frizzled locks are falling at the back. A female attendant standing behind him in triflex pose holds an umbrella in her hands. As the lower part of the sculpture is now damaged, the details carved on it cannot be traced out. It can be dated to c. 6th century A.D. Another contemporary image of the deity is *in situ* at Bausa (Etah, Uttar Pradesh).[3]

An image sculptured on the granite surface of the Jahangira hill at Sultanganj in Bhagalpur district (fig. 4), which Sir A. Cunningham had regarded as Kalki, was later on correctly identified as Revanta.[4] The sculpture, which is now badly weather-worn, shows him seated on horseback. He wears a conical crown and top-boots, and is accompanied by the hunting party. Two of his attendants are blowing trumpets and one is playing on a drum. The image has been regarded as a fine example of the classical Gupta art of the 5th century A.D.

An elegantly carved image of Revanta found at Pachar, district Gaya, is displayed in the Patna Museum (No. 10648; ht. 60 cms; fig. 5). He wears a beautiful head-dress and his curly locks are flowing on the shoulders. The peculiar umbrella held above his head by an attendant has a flying banner. The sculpture shows all the characteristics of the Gupta period, 5th-6th century A.D.

A remarkable sculpture of light grey stone from Central India showing in high relief Revanta (face damaged) riding on his caparisoned horse was preserved in the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin (No. 1C 34614; ht. 105 cms; fig. 6).[5] The deity accompanied by his hosts (Guhyakas) is shown proceeding to the proper right. He holds a flower in his right hand, while the left (damaged) carries a bowl and the reins of the horse in between his two fingers. He wears an ornamented double necklace, a simple bracelet and tunic secured with a girdle at the waist. A hound is seen below the horse with its head raised upwards. Three figures are shown behind Revanta and one of them is carrying an umbrella, the upper part of which is now damaged. The central figure carries on his shoulders a *vihaṅgikā* from which hang two pots, and the third has a bag on his left shoulder, and holds the leg of an animal (or a bird) in his raised right hand. Four figures are shown on the right of the deity among which two carry a dead animal (not very clear, but may be a small pig) on their shoulders. Below them, a figure is shown holding an upraised sword and a circular shield, while on the ground another man (*harakārā*) is depicted beating a drum.

(The figures of the Guhyakas wear single-beaded necklaces (*ekāvalīs*). Some of them have curly locks, while others have their hair arranged artistically in typical Gupta style. The mane and the beaded string shown round the neck and also a chain with grelot bells decorating the horse reminds us of a headless Gupta sculpture of a leogryph-rider from Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh), now displayed in the National Museum, New Delhi (No. 59.527.6).[6] The image is datable to the Vardhana period, 6th-7th century A.D.)

(An excellent image of Revanta carved out in buff sandstone and hailing from eastern Uttar Pradesh has been recently gifted by Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lenart to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (No. M.73.87.1; ht. 58.4 cms; Frontispiece). The deity wears a short *kulhā*-type crown, usual jewellery and the boots tied with laces. A dog is depicted near his right foot and a pig in front. The six figures carved in the lower panel are shown playing on various musical instruments in different moods and poses. The continuance of the Gupta art traditions can very well be seen in this sculpture of the 6th-7th century A.D.[7]

Another image of Revanta probably from Uttar Pradesh is preserved in the Linden Museum, Stuttgart (No. A.32.607; ht. 71 cms; fig. 7). The image shows the god going for hunting in a jungle. He wears a short crown and the typical jewellery of the period. The figures of the flying *vidyādhara* and the attendants show the perceptible influence of Gupta art. But the figure of horse is too much stylised and unproportionate. This image also appears to have been executed during the Vardhana period, 7th century A D.

Revanta's worship gained much popularity in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal during the early mediaeval period. An image of Revanta along with his attendants is kept in the Kubareśvara temple at Panar village in district Ahmedabad (fig. 8). It is datable to the Chaulukya period, c. 10th century A.D. Other contemporary images, though now badly damaged and weather-worn, can be noticed on the Sun temples at Than, district Surendranagar and at Modhera in Gujarat.

A number of images of Revanta have been discovered at various places in Rajasthan. The dilapidated Sun temple inside the fort at Chittor built in the 8th century A.D. (fig. 9) presents an image of the god (badly damaged) in the central niche on its southern wall (fig. 10). An attendant carrying an umbrella is standing behind the deity, while another one holding a wine-jar is depicted on the left in front. Below a dog is shown attacking a boar from behind. Three other fragmentary sculptures of Revanta are lying in the Topakhānā and the site museum at Chittorgarh.[8]

The Harihara temple No. 1 at Osia, district Jodhpur, which is of the *pañchāyatana* type, shows an exquisitely carved image of Revanta on the southern face of the subsidiary shrine built for Sūrya and on the south-east corner of the main temple.[9] The dignity of its bearing, its deeply spiritual expression and graceful modelling testify to the artist's skill and ability (fig. 11). The Sun temple (c. 9th century A.D.) at the same site also has an image of the deity (face damaged) in one of the decorated niches of its back wall (fig. 12). Here, the hunting dog is depicted accompanying his master.

A fragmentary panel discovered at Mallah and displayed in the State Museum, Bharatpur, illustrates Revanta proceeding towards the right along with his hunting party (No. 63; ht. 46 cms; fig. 13). The deity is shown in the centre in between two horse-riders, namely, Piṅgala and Daṇḍa and other attendant figures. The lower part of the panel is badly damaged and on the top of it several musicians are seated in a row. One of the male attendants on the extreme right is depicted carrying a dead boar on his shoulders while the others are shown with beaming faces. Thus, it is apparent that the panel depicts the scene after hunting, when the party is returning with the booty along with several musicians in joyous mood. The sculpture is assignable to the Pratihāra period, 8th century A.D.

An exceptionally charming image of Revanta datable to the Pratihāra period, 8th century A.D., is *in sītu* at Abaneri, near Jaipur (fig. 14). He wears an ornamented crown, ear-ornaments, *ekāvalī* and typical armlets, popularly known as *taḍḍā* in Rajasthan. His attendants wear typical peaked caps as also shown in one of the paintings in cave No. I at Ajanta,[10] and one of them holds a lance. Two garland-holding *vidyādharas* are depicted above flanking the umbrella. The sculpture, though badly damaged, speaks volumes for the master Rājasthānī craftsman.

An elaborately carved architectural piece, probably from a Sun temple in eastern Rajasthan, depicts in one of the panels Revanta riding a horse, attended by an umbrella-bearer and a female attendant (No. 72.164; ht. 39 cms; fig. 15). He wears a three-pronged tiara and usual jewellery. A dog attacking a boar is depicted near his right foot. On his right is bearded Piṅgala and on the left is Daṇḍa, carrying a lance in his left hand. They are supported by the caryated figures In another niche on the right of Piṅgala is a standing figure probably another attendant of Revanta. The four panels are alternated by ornamental pillars crowned with *kīrtimukhas* as also shown in the numerous early mediaeval temples of the Pratihāra period, 9th-10th century A.D. The sculpture is now deposited in the

National Museum, New Delhi.

A colossal image of Revanta housed in the temple of Brahmāṇī-mātā at Bagaur (district Bhilwara) shows him riding on his horse to the left (ht. 110 cms; fig. 16). He wears a crown, a single-beaded necklace and a tunic. A conch-blower, a drum-beater and an attendant under a tree are shown on the extreme left. A pair of flying celestials is shown at the top, while on the pedestal a dog is depicted chasing two fleeing boars. The sculpture is a reminiscence of the classical Gupta art and can be dated to 8th-9th century A.D.[11]

Images of Revanta accompanied by his hunting party are also carved on the temples at Lamba, Jodhpur (8th-9th century A.D.; fig. 17) and Nimaj, district Pali (11th century A.D.; fig. 18). Unfortunately, though the sculptures are badly damaged, yet the depiction of the mythological story in such an elegant manner has a wonderful pictorial effect. An image of Revanta placed on the eastern slope of a big mound, famous for its *chaurāsī-khambā* building at Kaman near Bharatpur, is still worshipped by the local people.

Harshagiri (district Sikar), once a famous centre of the Chauhān art, has yielded a few images of Revanta belonging to the mediaeval period. D R. Bhandarkar[12] had to cancel his identification of an image of Kalki on the Harshanātha temple at Sikar, as he later on correctly identified it with Revanta. Another image of the god from this site and now deposited in the Rajputana Museum, Ajmer (No. 372; ht. 96.5 cms) shows a standing female figure pouring wine in the wine-cup held by Revanta in his right hand. A dog chasing a boar is depicted in front and a four-armed atlante figure is shown below the pedestal.

The Rajputana Museum at Ajmer preserves two more images of Revanta belonging to the mediaeval period. Among these, the one from Sawar (district Ajmer) shows him on horseback with a circular halo behind the head (No. 375; ht. 91.5 cms; fig. 19). A female figure standing in the front holds a wine-pot, while the male carries a sword and a shield. A female attendant standing behind the deity carries a bag from which she is taking out something with her right hand. A male attendant standing behind the horse holds an umbrella over the head of the god. The sculpture, assignable to 10th century A.D., beautifully illustrates hunting in process. Another such image (No. 299; ht. 68.5 cms) found at Kayadran (district Sirohi) and datable to the 11th century A.D., shows on the pedestal a boar chased by two dogs.

(An elegantly carved image of Revanta is enshrined in the temple of Ghanśyāmjī at Nagar, Rajasthan (fig. 20). Here, too, the deity wears a bejewelled crown and is profusely decked in various ornaments of the period and also bears a *śrīvatsa* mark on the chest.) He is preceded by two male figures, one of whom is blowing a conch. The neatly finished sculpture can be regarded as one of the masterpieces of the Chauhān art of the 12th century A.D.

Worship of Revanta appears to have been quite popular in Haryana also. A fragmentary sculpture from this State shows only two figures, proceeding on horseback to the left side (fig. 21). The image of Revanta can be identified from a few features such as an umbrella over his head and also by the attendants near him. The deity holds a cup in his right hand and the reins in the left. The horserider going in front of Revanta is holding a stylus and a palm-leaf, performing the duty of Piṅgala in the sculptures of Sūrya. But it is curious to note that he is without beards. As the sculpture is only partly preserved, it can be surmised that another figure of a horserider representing Daṇḍa must have been carved behind Revanta. The image is datable to the Tomara period, c. 12th century A.D.

The Patna Museum preserves a sculpture of Revanta (No. 11101; ht. 43 cms;. fig. 22) surrounded by several figures. A female attendant standing near the horse's head is shown holding a jar in her hands, while another figure depicted behind her is carrying a dead boar on his shoulders. The other members of the hunting party hold various weapons in their hands. The exact provenance of the image is not known, but it appears to have been fashioned in Bihar during the Pratihāra period, 8th-9th century A.D.

An image of Revanta found from the famous Buddhist site Sarnath is displayed in the National Museum, New Delhi (No. 60.475; ht. 21.4 cms; fig. 23). The deity is preceded by a soldier who is holding a double-edged straight sword and a shield. Another attendant depicted on the top right corner carries a boar on his shoulders. The deity wears a typical conical head-dress. The image is a product of the Pratihāra art of c. 9th century A.D. Another almost contemporary image of Revanta is worshipped as Kalki, in an old temple at Kanauj.

A fine though badly damaged image of Revanta is deposited in the Government Museum, Mathura

(No. 68.2.4; ht. 35.5 cms; fig. 24).[13] Like the Bharatpur Museum sculpture (fig. 13), here also the deity is preceded and followed by a horserider, namely, Daṇḍa and Piṅgala. The richness of the sculpture can be marked by viewing the delicate modelling of the female figure depicted in the centre holding a jar in her hands. Dogs chasing the pigs are shown above the decorated pedestal of the image. It can be dated to the 9th-10th century A.D.

The Imperial Pratihāras, who ruled over a vast empire in North India, had also some parts of Baijnath and other Himālayan regions under their sway. An image of Revanta fashioned in 9th-10th century A.D. is still under worship in a remote village near Jagesvara in Almora district (fig. 25). Another image of almost the same date,-though now badly weather-worn, is at Kashipur, district Nainital.[14] A very interesting image of Revanta representing him as a folk deity is preserved in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (No. B60-S7; ht. 30.5 cms; fig. 26). The image found somewhere in southern Uttar Pradesh is also datable to the 10th century A.D.

A mutilated sculpture of Revanta from Bhita is displayed in the Allahabad Museum (No. 402; ht. 63 cms; fig. 27).[15] The headless image of the deity, shown between Daṇḍa and Piṅgala on the horsebacks, holds a cup in his right hand. Two male figures under the central horse have their hands joined in adoration for the god. A few dogs, pigs and the *harakārā* figures are carved beneath the horses. The Navagrahas are depicted at the top. The image is datable to the Pratihāra period, 11th century A.D.

(A colossal image of Revanta broken in two parts was unearthed sometime back inside the Garhwa fort near Allahabad (fig. 28). Here, the deity holds a double-edged straight sword in his right hand, and a damaged object in the left. He wears a crown, usual ornaments and the top-boots. A dog attacking a boar is depicted near his broken right foot. The image can be dated to the Gāhaḍavāla period, 12th century A.D.)

(The State Museum, Lucknow, has three sculptures of Revanta found from different parts in eastern Uttar Pradesh. Among these, one belongs to the Pratihāra period, 8th century A.D. (No. 57.467; ht. 18 cms) and the other reproduced here was found at Jauhar, district Ghazipur (No. G. 475; ht. 32 cms; fig. 29). The god wears a crown, usual ornaments and top boots.) An attendant holds an umbrella from behind, while a female with a jar in her hands stands slightly bent forward in reverential attitude. The image can be assigned to the Gāhaḍavāla period, 12th century A.D. The third image is headless and badly damaged at places (No. H. 134; ht. 23 cms).

A number of images of Revanta have been found in different parts of Madhya Pradesh. The National Museum, New Delhi, has recently acquired a sculpture from Badoh-Pathari which shows Revanta and Piṅgala going towards the left side (No. 75.955; ht. 69 cms; fig. 30). The figure of Daṇḍa, which preceded Revanta, is now unfortunately damaged and lost. The god holds a cup and the reins in his hands. An attendant standing on his left carries a wine jar for him while another holds an umbrella as also shown in other sculptures of the deity. The bearded and moustached figure of Piṅgala wears a pointed cap and holds a pen and a manuscript in his hands. The figures of the horse-riders are carved under the shade of trees and creepers and a bird is depicted on one of the branches. The pedestal in front shows a dog attacking a boar and another fleeing boar is depicted below the horse of Piṅgala. The scene presents the game of hunting in a forest in a realistic manner. The curly hair of Revanta and his attendants and the bodily contours of the figures show the influence of the Gupta art in this finely executed sculpture of the early Pratihāra period, 8th century A.D.

The beautiful sculpture of Revanta built into the wall of the Vindhyavāsinī temple at Tumain (district Guna, Madhya Pradesh) shows him on horseback under a mango tree and shaded by an umbrella held by one of the attendants standing behind him (ht. 129 cms; fig. 31). Of his two hands, the right holds a cup and the left the reins. The sculpture also interestingly illustrates flying celestials, Gaṇeśa, Sūrya, Kārttikeya and other divinities on either side of Revanta. A boar chased by a dog is depicted in front, while on the pedestal is a hunting scene in accompaniment of dance and music. The image can be dated to the Pratihāra period, 8th century A.D.

The skilled artists of the Chandella period, who built numerous lofty temples at Khajuraho and its neighbourhood, had executed an excellent image of Revanta in bas-relief on the basement on the Lakshmaṇa temple (10th century A.D.) at Khajuraho.[16] But this identification has been doubted by some scholars.[17]

A charming image of Revanta placed in a temple at Sohagpur (district Shahdol, Madhya Pradesh) is still under worship by the local residents of the place (ht. 42 cms; fig. 32). The god in the centre is proceeding to the right along with Daṇḍa and Piṅgala and other members of his party. The umbrella over his head has fine tassels hanging on it. One of the attendants is carrying a pig on his shoulders and two are holding water-vessels in their hands to perform the ceremony of *upāsthāna*. Behind the umbrella-bearer, two hunters of the party are holding straight double-edged swords. Several dogs and pigs are depicted between the legs of the horses. The beautiful modelling of the figures suggests the hand of a master Kalachuri artist of c. 10th century A.D.

A unique sculpture lying at Marh-Pipariya in district Sagar shows the figure of Revanta in its lower panel and the bust of Kaśyapa (?), his grandfather in the upper panel (fig. 33). The sculpture damaged at places can be dated to the Chedi period, c. 10th century A.D. Another image of Revanta of the same date is also kept in a temple at Bhanpura in district Mandsor of Madhya Pradesh.

An image of Revanta from Manora near Bhadanpur (Madhya Pradesh) illustrates Revanta in the company of huntsmen. Two of them standing near the horse's head hold a staff and jar, while three standing behind the deity carry a boar,[18] a jar and a tray respectively. The pedestal shows in front the figures of musicians, etc. The image is heavily weathered and can be assigned to the Kalachuri period, 10th-11th century A.D.

Images of Revanta wrought in metal are also known. One such image belonging to the Kalachuri art of c. 11th century A.D. and found at Sripuri, is now in the possession of the former Mālguzār of the village.[19] Another image of Revanta made of brass is in a private collection at New Delhi (fig. 34).[20] The nimbate figure holds a double-edged sword in his raised right hand and the reins in the left. A bearded attendant holds an umbrella over the head of the god, while a woman with a jar in her hands stands on the left side. A soldier probably with a bow is accompanying the master on his right and a fleeing boar is depicted on the front. The beautiful image apears to have been fashioned in Gujarat in c. 12th century A.D.

Mention can also be made of a rare bronze image of Sūrya, probably from Uttar Pradesh, showing him standing in *samabhaṅga* pose and carrying lotuses in his hands (No. 72.275; ht. 19 cms; fig. 35). He is flanked by Daṇḍa and Piṅgala holding their usual attributes. An interesting feature in this image is that Revanta on horseback is depicted on the pedestal in front, facing his father, the sun god. Several literary works inform that Revanta should also be shown along with Sūrya and the same idea seems to have been translated in this image of the Pratihāra period, 11th century A.D., now preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi.[21]

That the artists of the Pāla period also did not lag behind in fashioning the sculptures of Revanta is proved by the find of numerous icons of the deity from Eastern India. Some mediaeval images discovered at Paharpur,[22] Nalanda[23] and in other parts of Bihar and Bengal are preserved in the Nalanda Museum,[24] Patna Museum,[25] the Indian Museum, Calcutta[26] and several other museums.

R.M. Martin, who made an extensive survey of Bihar and other parts of Eastern India in the 19th century A.D., has given an interesting account of an image of Revanta carved on the temple of Sūrya at Dapthu village, Thana Holasgunj in Bihar. He writes, "On the outside of the door is a very curious sculpture, which is called Bhairav, but seems to me to represent a prince riding out to hunt the antelope. He is accompanied by archers, musicians, targeteers, women, dog and c. The animal on which he rides, is by the natives called a sheep; but I presume was intended to represent a horse."[27] But it is clear from the line-sketch given by Martin, that the god is none else but Revanta with a wine-cup in his right hand and the reins of the horse in the left. He wears a tunic and high boots and a sword is shown hanging on the saddle like the image from Bakarganj (fig. 39). He is surrounded by several male and female figures. The most interesting among these is a *kāvaḍa*-bearer on his left and two men on his right, one carrying two pigs tied to a pole and the other carrying a pig on his shoulders. Two drummers, one archer and a dog chasing two animals, presumably pigs, etc., are depicted on the pedestal in front. The image is assignable to the Pāla period, 10th century A.D.

A Pāla image of Revanta (ht. 74 cms) discovered in the village of Hilsa, about 14 miles from Nalanda, was first regarded by S.M. Sastri as "a statue of Lord Buddha riding his horse Kanthaka to leave for good his father's house."[28] But J.N. Samaddar, who has given details of this sculpture, correctly identified it with Revanta.[29]

The worship of Revanta seems to have been quite popular in the Gaya district of Bihar. The images of this area were generally made of shining black stone found locally. An inscribed image of Revanta showing the usual features as in the sculptures from Eastern India, is deposited in the Allahabad Museum (No. 975; ht. 105 cm; fig. 36). Another slightly disfigured image, inscribed at the back, is displayed in the Reitberg Museum, Zurich (No. RVI 216; ht. 12 cms).[30] A damaged sculpture of the god is also fixed in the wall of a private house, situated in Manglāgaurī lane, Andar at Gaya. All the sculptures can be assigned to the Pāla period, c. 9th century A.D.

An elegantly carved image of Revanta from Bihar shows him riding on his horse in usual pose. Besides the umbrella bearer, several other attendant figures are also shown around the deity. A bird is depicted on either side of the *chhatra* and a peacock holding a cobra in its beak is shown on extreme left. The base in front has fleeing boars, a dog and a pair of deers giving an idea that the god is passing through a dense forest. The image now exhibited in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco can be dated to the Pāla period, c. 9th century A.D.(No. B63-S37; ht. 107 cms; fig. 37).

Another image of Revanta from Bihar wearing a high *kulhā* type of head-dress has been recently acquired by the National Museum, New Delhi (No. 74.93; ht. 54 cms; fig. 38). The deity is flanked by several attending figures and a hound is depicted under his left foot. The miniature male figures shown on the base are beating the drums for chasing the fleeing boars. The image is datable to the Pāla period, 10th century A.D.

A fine contemporary image of Revanta from Bihar with its exact provenance unknown is deposited in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.[31] A female attendant is pouring wine from a flask in the cup (*chashaka*) held in the right hand of Revanta, whose left hand holds the bridle. An attendant standing on the top right corner carries a dead boar on his shoulders, while another one carries a long pole from which a small pig is hanging. A dog with its tail twisted upwards is shown below the left foot of the deity. The pedestal shows in front a soldier shooting an arrow at the fleeing boar followed by a dog. Behind him are carved four figures, two of whom (*harakārās*) are beating the drums. This image is also datable to the 10th century A.D.

Another image of Revanta in the same museum shows him preceded by two attendants, each carrying a sword and a shield and surrounded by other figures (fig. 39).[32] The pedestal shows in sections a devotee with his hands joined in *añjali-mudrā*, a group of musicians and a fleeing boar on the extreme left. The slim and graceful figures have been faithfully portrayed by the master Pāla artist of the 11th century A.D.

An image of Revanta found at Ghatnagar (district Dinajpur) is preserved in the Varendra Research Society Museum at Rajshahi (fig. 40).[33] The deity holds a whip instead of a wine-cup in his right hand and reins in the left as usual. "Two robbers are shown near him, one ready to attack him from the front, the other from a tree-top behind.

The pedestal shows a woman standing, a devotee, a man with a sword and a shield about to attack a woman cutting a fish with fish-knife; in the right corner of the partially broken stele appears a dwelling house with a couple inside it."[34] The image carved in black basalt is an excellent example of the Pāla art of 11th century A.D.

A headless and badly damaged image of Revanta is displayed in the Dacca Museum (No. 3. A. (iii) b/1; ht. 107.5 cms).[35] It, too, has several accessory figures standing near the deity. The image was found at Badkamta, district Tippera and is datable to the 10th-11th century A.D.

Images of Revanta are also known from Orissa. An image of the deity on horseback in the northern niche f the Sun temple at Konarak, regarded as Sūrya by M.M. Ganguly[36] and H. Zimmer,[37] was identified by N.K. Bhattasali[38] with Revanta (ht. 358 cms; fig. 41). It should be remembered that unlike Revanta, who is invariably shown on horseback, Sūrya at Konarak has been represented as riding on his celestial chariot driven by seven galloping horses.[39] The image is a sublime product of the Eastern Gaṅga period, 13th century A.D.

A badly mutilated image of Revanta probably brought from the above Sun temple is kept inside the Triveṇīśvara temple at the village Madhipur, about half a mile north-west of Konarak. Another image of the god holding a sword and a cup in his hands is kept in the premises of the Pooneśvara temple at village Bhilli-Deuli in the Puri district. Artistically, both the images can be dated to the 13th century A.D.[40]

Revanta was a favourite deity of the Goṇḍas, a tribal clan of Madhya Pradesh, who were fond of hunting animals and eating their flesh. A temple at Deo-Baloda in district Durg has numerous friezes depicting hunting and war scenes on its walls. In one of the panels, Revanta is shown riding on a horse and attended by an umbrella-bearer (fig. 42). In front of him, two soldiers are depicted attacking a big boar from its rear, while on the other side another hunter with a lance in his right hand and holding the chain of the dog in the left, is shown attacking the animal. The temple and the sculptures carved on it, belong to the last phase of the Gonḍa art of 16th century A.D.

Besides the above interesting sculpture, a few more images of Revanta denote the existence of his worship in the late mediaeval period. Reference can be cited of a brass image of the deity bearing a dedicatory inscription of V.S. 1662 (1505 A.D.) at its base (No. O.585; ht. 23 cms). The deity is seated on a caparisoned horse holding the reins in his both hands. He does not hold a cup nor wears a crown as seen in other images, but has a twisted tuft of hair (*śikhā*) on his head. A quiver and a push-dagger hang on the left and a sword, a shield and a bow in a case are also depicted, which indicate that he is going for hunting. The image hailing from Gujarat is on display in the Rev. Father Heras Institute, Bombay.[41]

A richly carved image of Revanta in yellow stone from the Jaisalmer region in Rajasthan, represents the high-water mark of the later phase of the Rājasthānī plastic art (No. 65.149; ht. 45 cms; fig. 43). He wears a conical crown, lower garment and long boots as we generally see in the images of Sūrya from Northern India. He is thrashing a spear held in his right hand to a boar shown under the foot of his caparisoned horse and in the left he holds the reins. A push-dagger is tucked to his waist. An attendant carrying an umbrella is standing behind, while a bearded figure stands on the left in front carrying a water-vessel in his hands to indicate the *upāsthāna* of the deity. A cow with a calf sucking her milk and a horse (headless) are depicted on the right and left sides of the deity. Below these, an amorous couple and Gaṇeśa with his mount, a mouse, holding a sweet-ball, are shown. Their presence probably indicates that where Revanta is worshipped, there always exists happiness, peace, plenty and prosperity. The horse suggests that Revanta is the Divine Master of horses and Gaṇeśa, as is well known, is the god of success and remover of all the obstacles. The figure of the donor seated with folded hands is shown below. Apart from the iconographic features, which are nicely executed here, the picturesque delineation suggests the prowess and valour of Rājpūt princes often shown in later Rājasthānī paintings.

The pedestal of the image bears a three-line inscription of V.S. 1682 (1625 A.D.).[42] It records that the image was installed in the victorious reign of Mahārājādhirāja Mahārāja Rāula Śrī Kalyāṇadāsajī. The name of the donor is not recorded hence, it appears that Kalyāṇadāsa himself had set up this image. The inscription is as below :

1. *Saṁvat 1682 varshe āsā(shā)ḍha vadi 5 ravau mahārājādhirāja*
2. *Mahārājarāula śrīkalyāṇadāsajī vijaya rājye mūrtti*

3. *Śrī reba(vaṅ)tarī thāpanā kīdhī chhe śrīrastu kalyāṇamastu*/

T.A.G. Rao,[43] H K. Sastri,[44] B.C. Bhattacharya[45] and other scholars, who have written so much on Hindu iconography, are silent about the images of Revanta from South India and the Deccan, "probably because", as supported by J.N. Banerjea,[46] "they are almost unknown in Southern India." In the light of several epigraphs enumerated in the previous chapter, it can be believed that Revanta was not altogether an unknown deity in this part of the country. P.R. Srinivasan[47] has mentioned a few temples of Revanta at Barkur in Tulu-Nad (South India). One of these, which contains figures of the several important divinities, has an image of Revanta enshrined in its sanctum (fig. 44). It is regarded as a very important shrine of the area. The pious devotees perform various types of ceremonies on festival days for the fulfilment of their vows. The image of Revanta riding on a horse holds a sword in his right hand and the reins in his left. The deity wearing a *karaṇḍa-makuṭa* has an umbrella over his head. A hooded serpent is depicted on his either side. This and also two or three more shrines dedicated to this deity at Barkur are indicative of the fact that Revanta cult is still popular with the people here.[48]

The importance of the above shrines led T.G. Aravamuthan to feel that "with the evidence we now have, as at Barkur, we cannot doubt but that Revanta was among forms of godhead accepted all over the south. Indeed, Revanta being noted also for his beauty, the Sundaras, the 'Beautiful Ones', of Mathurai of the Pandya country,—the god-forms presiding over Mathurai as Śiva (Sundareśvara) and as Vishṇu (Kūdal-Aḷagar or Sundara-rāja),—may well be deemed to incorporate a Revanta element which, however, has got obliterated from memory by sectarian emphases."[49]

A small shrine at Banahalli (Hoskoṭe, Taluk Hasigāla) has images of several Hindu divinities. Among these, "there is also a curious two-armed seated figure holding what looks like a noose and a whip with two horses on the pedestal, one with a saddle and other without it. May this represent Revanta ?"[50] is a hypothetical question. But from the description it appears that this image probably represents Śāstā or Aiyanār. Similarly, "a figure of a man riding a horse and carrying a sword in the left hand exists in a small shrine at Basavaṇṇa, Hole-Narsipur Taluk. It is called by the local people as Kuṇṭarāmappa. Such figures are known as Rāmedevaru in other places. The figure in question perhaps represents Revanta."[51] Unless such images are properly examined, one cannot be sure about the identification of these as well as many more sculptures which are worshipped under different names.

An image of Revanta carved in black stone was discovered some years ago near the Panhala fort, in Kolhapur district of Maharashtra. It is now displayed in the Kolhapur Museum under the caption of 'Khanḍobā', the most commonly worshipped deity in the region, who also rides a horse (No. 761; ht. 6 cms; fig. 45).[52] The image, datable to c. 12th century A.D., probably held a sword (now broken) in his raised right hand and reins in the left. He wears a crown, ornaments, *dhotī*, etc,.

and a dagger is tucked to his waist. Between the feet of the horse, a dog is attacking the fleeing boar. Two attendants are standing behind the deity. This may be yet another example of the image of Revanta worshipped under the name of other popular deity of the region.

The tradition of Revanta's worship in the far south of the country is proved by a miniature painting of the Marāṭhā school, 18th century A.D., which presents him as a four-armed god riding on a caparisoned horse with his consort Ratnāvatī (No. 57.75. 34; ht. 25.2 cms; fig. 46). The moustached god wears a high ornate crown, jewellery and the dress typical of that period and also carries various attributes. His consort holds a wine-flask in her right hand and is smelling a flower held in the left. Two flying celestials, from amidst the clouds, are shown showering flowers mixed with coloured powder on the divine couple. A hound is depicted near the legs of the horse, which proves that the god riding on his horse is out for hunting. This unique painting is in the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi.

Joanna Williams[53] has published two Khotanese paintings depicting equestrian figures. The first of these now preserved in the British Museum, London (No. D.VII.5) shows a male figure riding on a horse. He carries a cup in the right hand and holds the reins in the left. Besides a head ornament tied with a fillet, he also wears a tunic and black boots. A sword is hanging on his left side. A figure of a camel rider is depicted below him.[54] The other painting, which is now lost, only shows the figure of a horserider in almost identical manner (No. D.X.5). The panels have been dated to 7th-8th century A.D.

The figures of horseriders from Khotan are nimbate, which suggests that they are not ordinary cavaliers but the divine beings. Their costumes and other similarities with the Indian images of Revanta are quite striking. Though the hunting scene is not shown in these paintings, this alone should not deter us from identifying the equestrian deities with Revanta. As seen in the first chapter, there are several literary works where the hunting scene has not been referred to while describing the image of Revanta.[55]

The depiction of a bird is also not an unusual feature as we find the same represented in an early Pratihāra sculpture from Badoh-Pathari now preserved in the National Museum (fig. 30), which shows the deity going for hunting in a dense forest. Interestingly, the sculpture of the deity exhibited in the Bharatpur Museum depicts a pair of birds in the sky, carrying jewelled ornaments in their beaks (fig. 13). It can, therefore, be believed that these majestic figures having regal bearing, truly represent Revanta in all possibility.

(Thus, it is evident that the earliest images of Revanta discovered at various places in North India belong to the Gupta period, 5th-6th century A.D. These icons show the deity engaged in the game of hunting along with his huntsmen. The artist of the Pāla period followed this tradition in fashioning the images of god in Bihar and Bengal. But in contrast to this, the iconography of Revanta becomes slightly complex in other parts of North India.) The images of Revanta executed during the early mediaeval period in Rajasthan, Uttar

Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh also show him flanked by Daṇḍa and Piṅgala and sometimes even the Navagrahas are also depicted at the top. Though only a very few sculptures of Revanta from South India and the Deccan have been briefly discussed above, there might be many such images of the god which are either worshipped under different names or have not yet been published.

It is also well-known that various traditions evolved during the Gupta period had crossed the borders of India and had reached distant lands like Nepal, Tibet, Central Asia, Ceylon and the countries of South-East Asia and influenced their cultures. There are positive proofs that besides Buddha, the worship of several Hindu gods like Śiva, Vishṇu, Gaṇeśa, Sūrya, Indra, etc., was quite popular in Central Asia in ancient times. According to the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Revanta was the god who delivered people from the terrors of forests and also from the enemies and robbers and bestowed upon his devotees comfort, happiness, health, etc. It is, therefore, no wonder that during the early mediaeval period, when the Indian traders went to far-off lands including Central Asia for their trade, they took with them the worship of their favourite god for obtaining his divine grace.

NOTES

1. *Bhavishya Purāṇa*, 124, 13-39.
2. Bhandarkar, D.R., The Archaeological Remains and Excavations at Nagari, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India,* 4, pp. 125-26, pl. XV, fig. b.
3. Singh, S.B., Archaeological Review of District Etah, *Bulletin of Museums and Archaeology in U.P.*, 1, p. 58.
4. Sahai, S., A Rare Sculpture of Revanta from Sultanganj, *Journal of the Bihar Research Society,* XLVII, I-IV, pp. 211-13.
5. Härtel, H., Indische Skulpturen, I : *Die Werke der frühindischen, klassischen und frühmittelalterlichen Zeit* (Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin), p. 69, pl. 36.
6. Cf. Ashton, L.(ed.), *The Art of India and Pakistan*, p. 50, pl. 31, fig. 208.
7. Pal, P., *The Sacred and Secular in Indian Art*, p. 5, pl. 15.
8. *Department of Archaeology and Museums,* Jaipur, Neg. Nos. 1. B.3325, 2. B.3603 and 3. B.3377.
9. Mrs. Pupul Jayakar has wrongly identified this image as that of a 'king on horse with umbrella overhead.' See her article on Osia in the *Mārg*, XII, 2, p. 55, fig. 7.
10. Cf. B. Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, p. 248, fig. 185.
11. Kumar, V., Bāgaur Kī Eka Revanta Pratimā, *The Researcher*, VII-IX, pp. 96-97, pl. XVIII.
12. Bhandarkar, D.R., *Progress Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, Western Circle*, 1909-10, p. 54.
13. Srivastava, V.N., Acquisitions in the Mathura Museum, *Bulletin of Museums and Archaeology in U.P.*, 2, p. 58, fig. IV.
14. *Arch. Survey of India*, New Delhi, Neg. No. 1208.38-39.
15. Chandra, P., *Stone Sculptures in the Allahabad Museum,* p. 108, pl. XCV.

16. Dhamma, B.L. and Chandra, S.C., *Khajurāho*, p. 18; Zannas, E. and Auboyer, J., *Khajurāho*, p. 81.
17. Awasthi, R., *Khajurāho Kī Deva Pratimāyen*, pp. 182-83.
18. R.D. Banerji has wrongly regarded it a ram or a deer. See his *The Haihayas of Tripuri and their Monuments*, p. 106, pl. XLVI, fig. a.
19. Mirashi, V.V., *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, IV, I, p. clxi.
20. *Arch. Survey of India*, New Delhi, Neg. No. 316.58.
21. See Appendix A.
22. *Annual Report, Archaeological Survey of India*, 1929-30, p. 141.
23. Ghosh, A., *Nālandā*, p. 50; Banerji, R.D., *Eastern Indian School of Mediaeval Sculpture*, pl. LXV, fig. e.
24. Four stone sculptures of Revanta bearing the following accession numbers are preserved in the Archaeological Museum at Nalanda :
    1. No. 10619; ht. 25 cms; *A.S.I.*, New Delhi, Neg. No. 648.68 (headless and inscribed).
    2. No. 10786; ht. 14 cms; *A.S.I.*, New Delhi, Neg. No. 492.68 (headless).
    3. No. 10789; ht. 19.5 cms; *A.S I.*, New Delhi, Neg. No. 494.68 (defaced).
    4. No. 00037; ht. 16 cms; *A.S I.*, New Delhi, Neg. No. 488.68 (damaged).
25. Antiquity No. 1722.
26. Cabinet 15, 3621, 3775, 3776 and 3777.
27. Martin, R.M., *Eastern India*, I, p. 99, pl. XVI, fig. 7.
28. Sastri, S.M., The Hilsa-Statue Inscription of the thirty-fifth year of Devapāla, *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, X, I and II, p. 32.
29. Samaddar, J.N., A Note on Revanta, *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, XIV, I, p. 134.
30. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, J.E., *Indian Sculptures in the von der Heydt Collection, Museum Rietberg*, Zurich, pp. 72-75, fig. 14a.
31. Bidyabinod, B.B., An Illustrated Note on an Indian deity called Revanta, *Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (n.s.), V, 10, pp. 391-92, pl. XXX.

32. *Annual Report, Archaeological Survey of India*, 1928-29, p. 160, pl. LIV, fig. b.
33. Sanyal, N.B., A New Type of Revanta from the Dinajpur District, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, III, 3, pp. 469-70.

    Another image of Revanta, though headless and badly damaged, is also displayed in the Varendra Research Society (No. F.(C)1/258). The image found at Malda is datable to the Pāla period, 10th-11th century A.D. See Basak, R.G. and Bhattacharya, B.C., *A Catalogue of the Archaeological Relics in the Museum of the Varendra Research Society*, Rajshahi, p. 26.
34. Banerjea, J.N., *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, pp. 442-43, pl. XXIX, fig. 2.
35. Bhattasali, N.K., *The Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, p. 177, pl. LXII, fig. a.
36. Ganguly, M.M., *Orissa and her Remains*, p. 448.
37. Zimmer, H., *The Art of Indian Asia*, I, p. 415, II, pl. 371.
38. Bhattasali, N.K., *op. cit.*, p. 176.
39. Dr. D. Mitra on the basis of a verse from the *Agni Purāṇa* has identified the sculpture in the Sun temple at Konarak with Bhāskara. See her *Koṇārak*, p. 71.
40. I owe this information to Dr. K.S. Behra of Utkal University, Cuttack.
41. Dr. Kalpana Desai had kindly shown the image to me, for which I am grateful to her.
42. Sharma, D., Rāshtrīya Sangrahālaya me Sangrahita Revanta kī Madhyakālīna mūrti aur V.S. 1682 kā Abhilekha, *Maru Bhāratī*, Jan. 1966, pp. 1-2.
43. Rao, T.A.G., *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, 1, II, pp. 299-323.
44. Sastri, H.K., *South Indian Gods and Goddesses*, p. 236.
45. Bhattacharya, B.C., *Indian Images*, I, p. 15.
46. Banerjea, J.N., Sūrya, Ādityas and the Navagrahas, *Journal of Indian Society of Oriental Art*, XVI, p. 91.
47. Srinivasan, P.R., Some Interesting Antiquities from Tulu-Nad, *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, I, pp. 76-77. I am grateful to Śrī H. Sarkar for kindly drawing my attention to this important reference.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85, fig. 9. I had discussed the iconography of

this rare image with Śrī C. Sivaramamurti. He kindly told me that the depiction of a hooded cobra on either side of the figure suggests its affiliation with Śiva and the image may, therefore, represent Hariharaputra or Śāstā and not Revanta as suggested by Śrī Srinivasan.

49. Aravamuthan, T.G., Origin and Growth of Religion, *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India,* I, pp. 109-10.

50. *Annual Report, Archaeological Survey of Mysore*, Bangalore, 1919, p. 7.

51. *Annual Report, Archaeological Survey of Mysore for the year ending 30th June 1913*, p. 11.

52. I am thankful to Śrī N.V. Pawar for drawing my attention to this image.

53. Williams, J., The Iconography of Khotanese Painting, *East and West*, 23, 1-2, pp. 150-51, figs. 66-67.

54. The correct identification of such figures which have simply been described as a camel rider or a prince is still not known. The *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (ch. 57, vv. 1-2) mentions camel as the mount of Virupāksha. But the other details about this lokapāla narrated in the *Purāṇa* do not tally in any way with the figure of the camel rider from Khotan.

My colleague Dr. S.P. Gupta has kindly drawn my attention to a few paintings from Central India, displayed in the National Museum, New Delhi. One of these paintings shown to me by Śrī Amarendra Nath depicts a camel rider similar to the one published by Dr. Joanna Williams (No. F.II iii.002; Andrews, F.H., *Descriptive Catalogue of Antiquities Recovered by Sir A. Stein*, p. 101).

The other two paintings from Tun-Huang illustrating Virupāksha (Nos. ch. LV0046; ch. XX0011) are very much based on the iconographic description given in the *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa* cited above. The former of these even bears the name of the deity as Virupāksha on its upper right corner.

It will not be out of place to mention here that the tutelary deity of the Pushkaraṇā Brāhmaṇas (who originally belonged to the Pushkar region) of Rajasthan, known as Ūnṭhādevī or Ushṭrādevī, also has a camel as her mount. A number of images of the goddess have been found at Chittorgarh and other places in Rajasthan.

Śrī V.S. Srivastava of Jodhpur has recently discovered a memorial stone bearing an inscription of V.S. 1240 (1183 A.D.) from Chandravati, Rajasthan, which also has the figure of a female riding on a camel. He has also found another similar stone from Nadol, Rajasthan, datable to 18th century A.D., which interestingly depicts a male camel rider. However, the context shows that the camel rider here was a common man rather than a deity.

In the ultimate analysis, it can only be said that the tradition of showing a camel as a mount either of a deity or a departed soul was an age-old tradition in Rajasthan and it is just possible that this tradition in course of time migrated into Central Asia, where it assumed different forms in different contexts. *But this suggestion, however, is absolutely tentative and should be treated only as a suggestion.*

55. Cf. *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, III, 70, 53; *Bhavishya Purāṇa*, 79, 82; *Chaturvargachintāmaṇi*, *Vratakhaṇḍa*, p. 137, etc.

CHAPTER IV

RESUME

A retrospective review of the foregoing pages would bring it home that worship of Revanta came into vogue in the Gupta period, during which the iconographic forms of most of the Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina deities were standardised. Thea vailable literary and archaeological evidences reveal that Revanta was worshipped almost all over North India during this period. During the Vardhana period, the images of Revanta continued to be executed and worshipped by the people.

When the Imperial Pratihāras came to power in 8th century A.D., the worship of Revanta gained more popularity along with the worship of other Hindu deities. Several kings of this dynasty were the worshippers of Sūrya as is evident from the Pratābgarh inscription of Mahendrapāla II. It is, therefore, not very unlikely that they also adored Revanta, the son of Sūrya. Most of the sculptures of the deity from North India belong to the Pratihāra period.

Though the Pratihāra power declined in 11th century A.D., yet the worship of Revanta continued. The kings of later dynasties, who, though worshipped their own tutelary divinities, had eclectic outlook towards Revanta and other deities. The reason for more popularity of Revanta's worship in Rajasthan may be that the traders of this region who went to far-off lands by land and sea routes were probably always afraid of thieves and robbers in the way and as the *Kuvalayamālā Kathā* informs that the worship of the god saved his devotees from such dangers. Revanta came to be regarded as the protector particularly of the trading class, who, endowed with riches, could also make images of the deity for worship at different places in Rajasthan. Sometimes images of Revanta were fixed on the outer wall of the temples of the Sun, as one can see at Chittorgarh, Osia, Than, Modhera and several other places. People going for worship of Sūrya could also have a glimpse of Revanta for their health and happiness.

Several inscriptions and few of images at our disposal prove that the god had sizable following in Deccan and South India excepting Tamil Nadu. But as Jyeshṭhā, the goddess of sloth, was quite an unknown divinity in North India, similarly, Revanta probably occupied the same position in Tamil Nadu. As regards the other parts of India, Revanta's function of the bestower of health and happiness was regained by Sun during the late mediaeval period and thus Sun eclipsed Revanta who was soon forgotten and was almost lost in the multitude of Indian divinities.

APPENDIX A

The *Naidānika* texts belonging to the mediaeval period mention the depiction of Revanta along with other figures in an image of Sūrya :

रविः कार्यः शुभश्मश्रुः सिन्दूरारुणसप्रभः ।
उद्दीप्तवेशः स्वाकारः सर्वाभरणसंयुतः ॥
चतुर्बाहुर्महातेजाः कवचेनाभिसंवृतः ।
कर्तव्या रशना चास्य या वियंगेति संज्ञिता ॥
रश्मयस्तस्य कर्तव्या वामदक्षिणहस्तयोः ।
ऊर्ध्वस्रग्‌दामसंस्थानाः सर्वपुष्पाञ्चिताः शुभाः ॥
सुरूपरूपेः स्वाकारो दण्डः कार्योऽस्य वामतः ।
दक्षिणे पिङ्गलो भागे कर्तव्यश्चातिपिङ्गलः ॥
उद्दीप्तवेशौ कर्तव्यौ तावुभावपि यादव ।
तयोर्मूर्ध्नि विन्यस्तौ करौ कार्यौ विभावसोः ॥
लेखनीपत्रककरः कार्यो भवति पिङ्गलः ।
चर्मशूलधरो दण्डस्तथा यत्नाद् विधीयते ॥
सिंहो ध्वजश्च कर्तव्यस्तथा सूर्यस्य वामतः ।
चत्वारश्चास्य कर्तव्यास्तनयास्तस्य पार्श्वयोः ॥
रेवन्तश्च यमश्चैव मनुद्वितयमेव च ।
ग्रहराजो रविः कार्यो ग्रहैर्वा परिवारितः ॥
राज्ञी च रिक्षुभा छाया तथा देवी सुवर्चला ।
चतस्रश्चास्य कर्तव्याः पत्न्यश्च परिपार्श्वयोः ॥
एकचक्रेऽथ सप्ताश्वे षडरे वा रथोत्तमे ।
उपविष्टस्तु कर्तव्यो देवो ह्यरुणसारथिः ॥
गायत्र्युष्णिनुष्टुप् च बृहती पंक्तिरेव च ।
त्रिष्टुप् च जगती सप्त छदांस्यर्करथे हयाः ॥

रश्मिभिः करसंस्थस्तु धारयत्यखिलं जगत् ।
सिहो ध्वजगतश्चास्य साक्षाद् धर्मः प्रकीर्तितः ।।
रशनास्थं जगत् सर्वं देवो धारयते तथा ।
राज्ञी भू रिक्षुभा द्यौश्च छाया छाया प्रकीर्तिता ।।
प्रभा सुवर्चला प्रोक्ता तस्य देवस्य पत्नयः ।
रक्तवर्णः स भगवांस्तेजसां धाम कारणात् ।।
असह्यतेजोधारित्वाद् गूढगात्रस्तथैव च ।
एवं सर्वमयं धाम सूर्य एव प्रकीर्तितः ।।
रूपं तवैतद् दिवसस्य भर्तुर्मयेरितं सर्वजगन्मयस्य ।
तेजोनिधानस्य परोज्ज्वलस्य सर्वाधिनाथस्य सनातनस्य ।।

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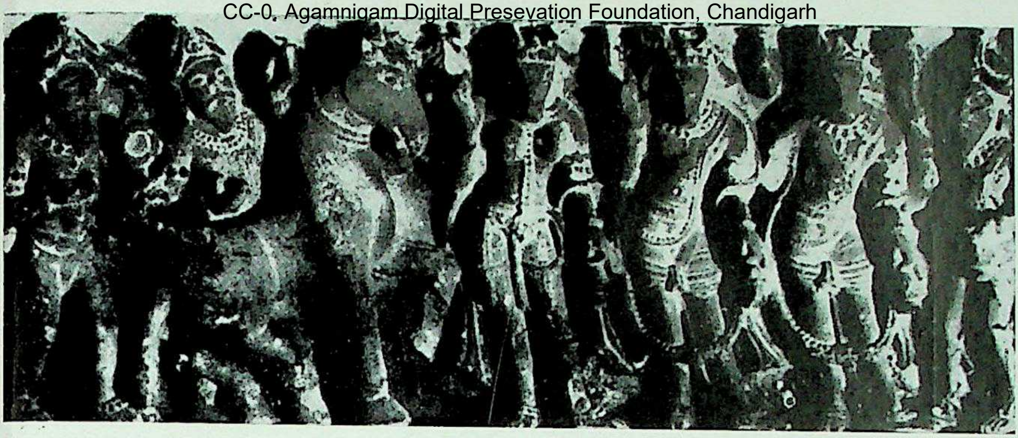

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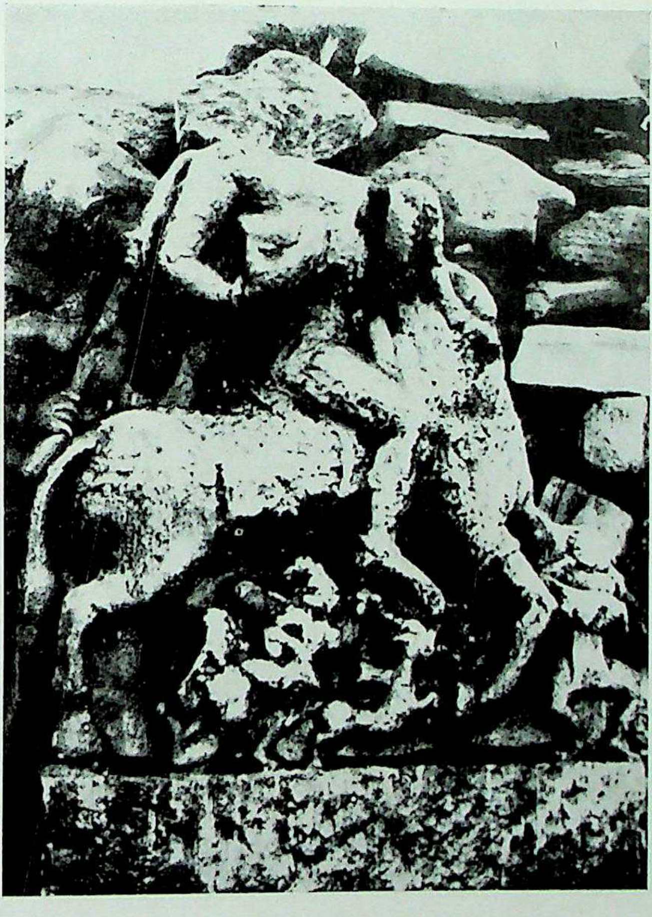

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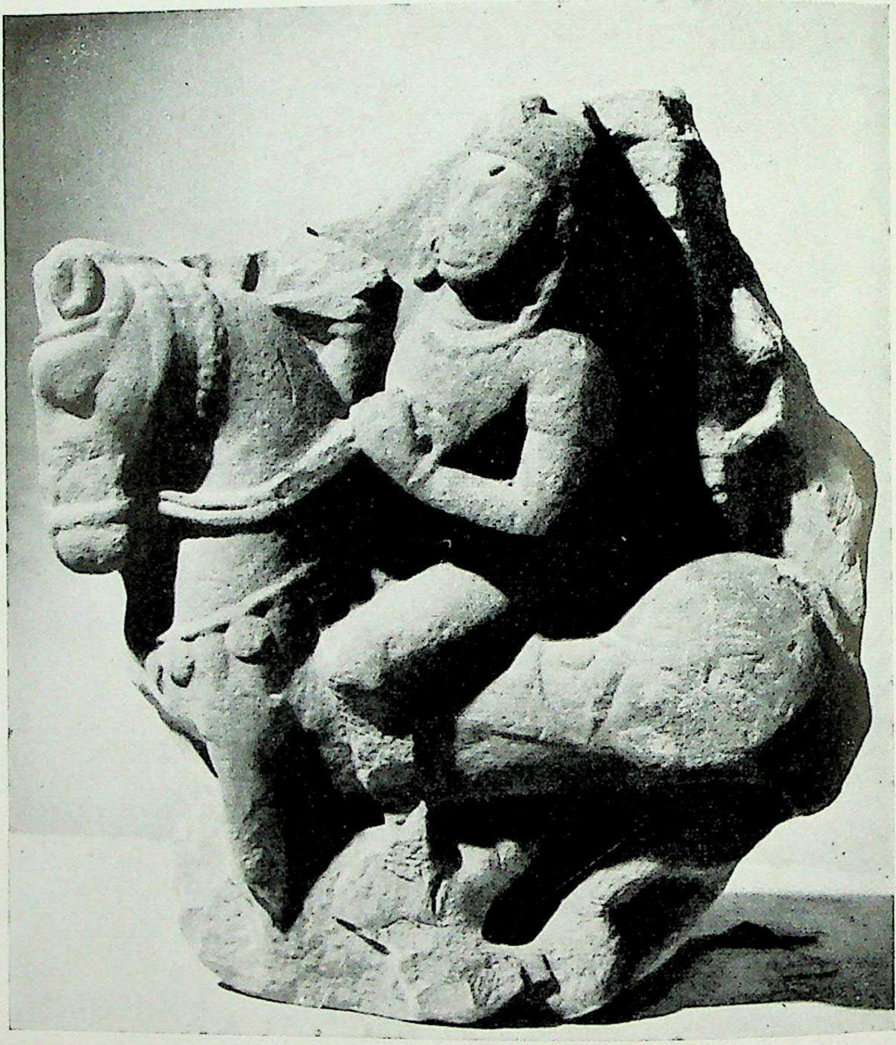

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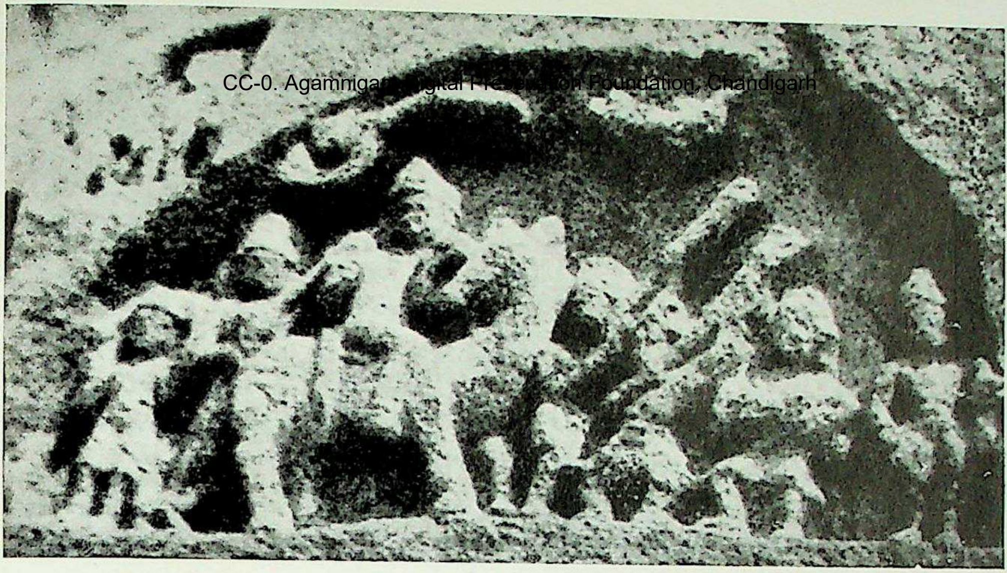

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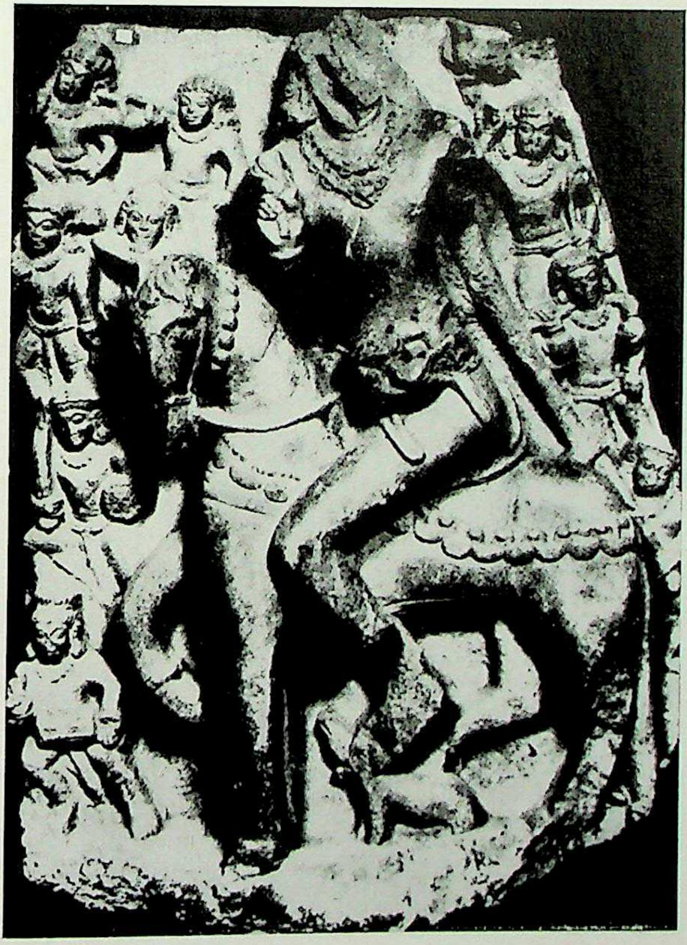

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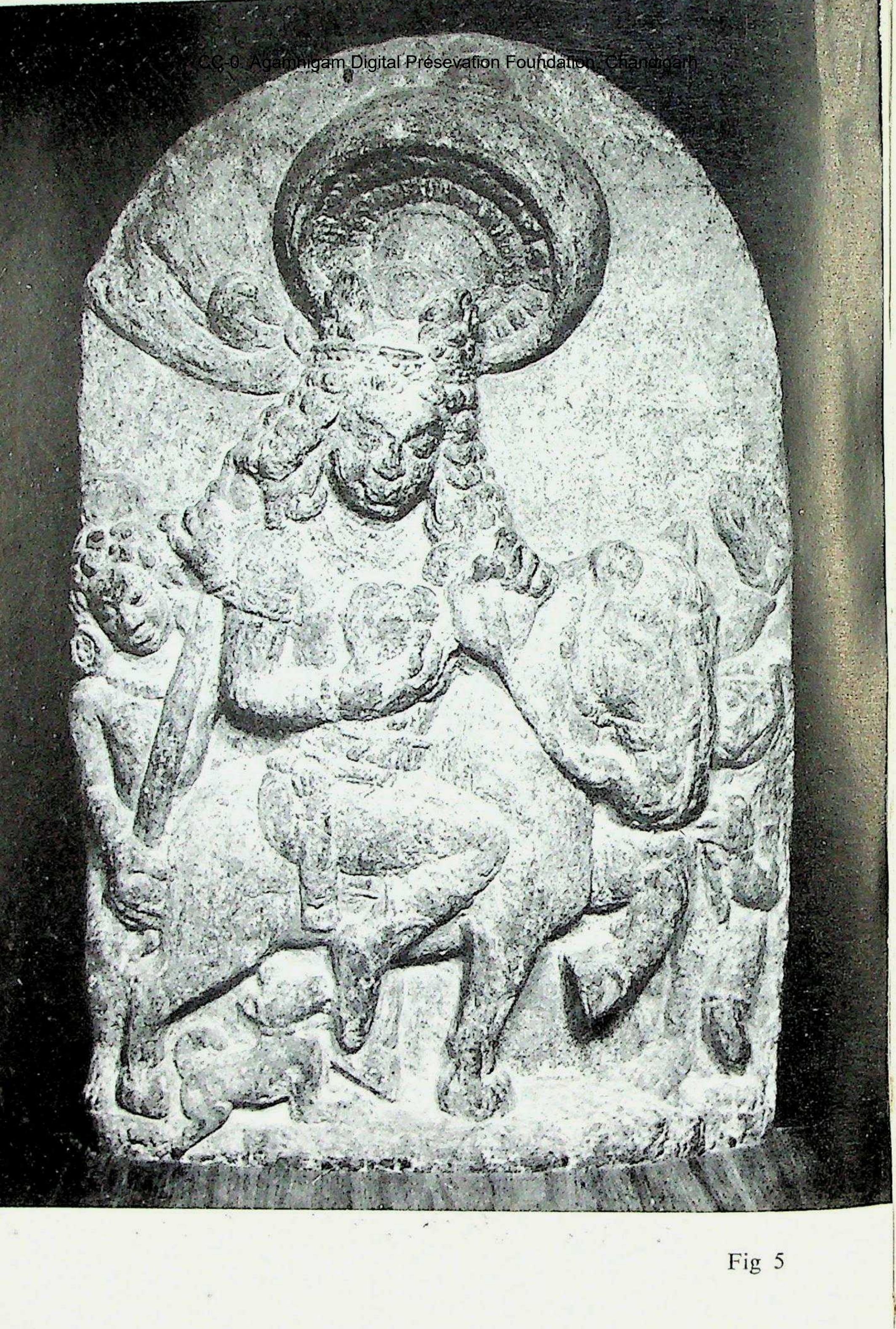

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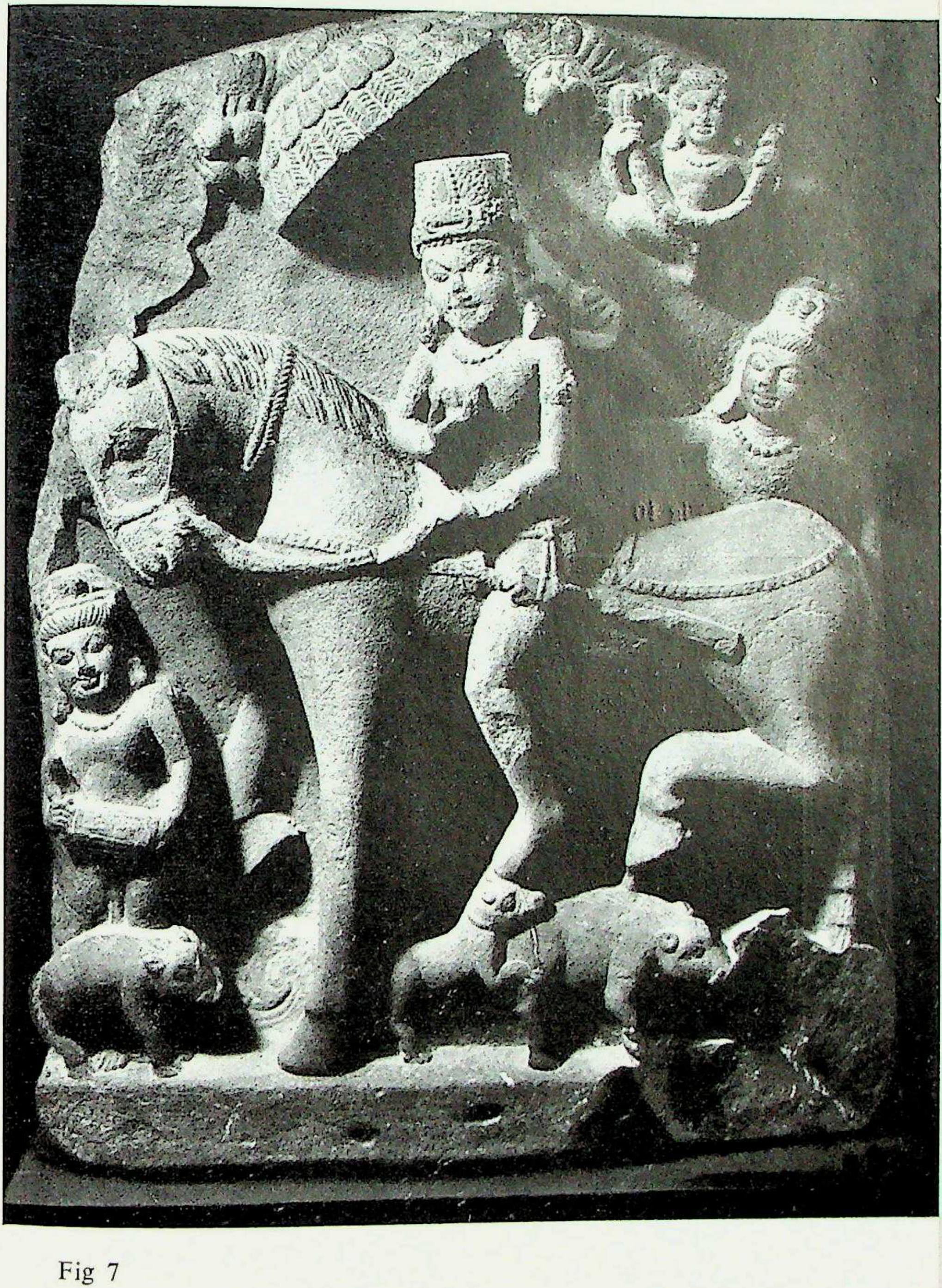

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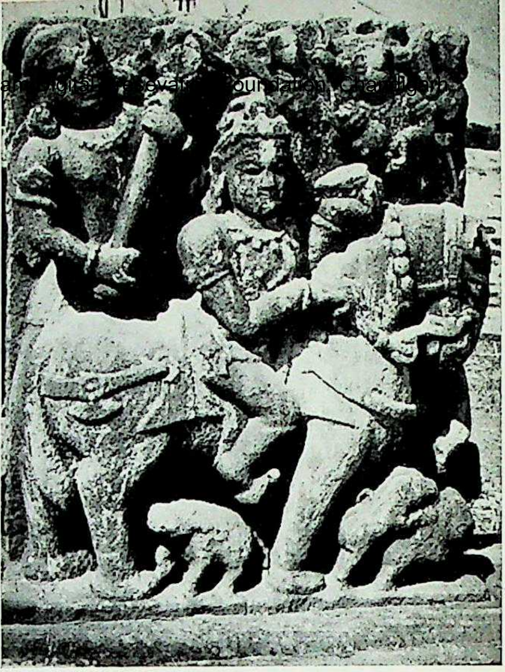

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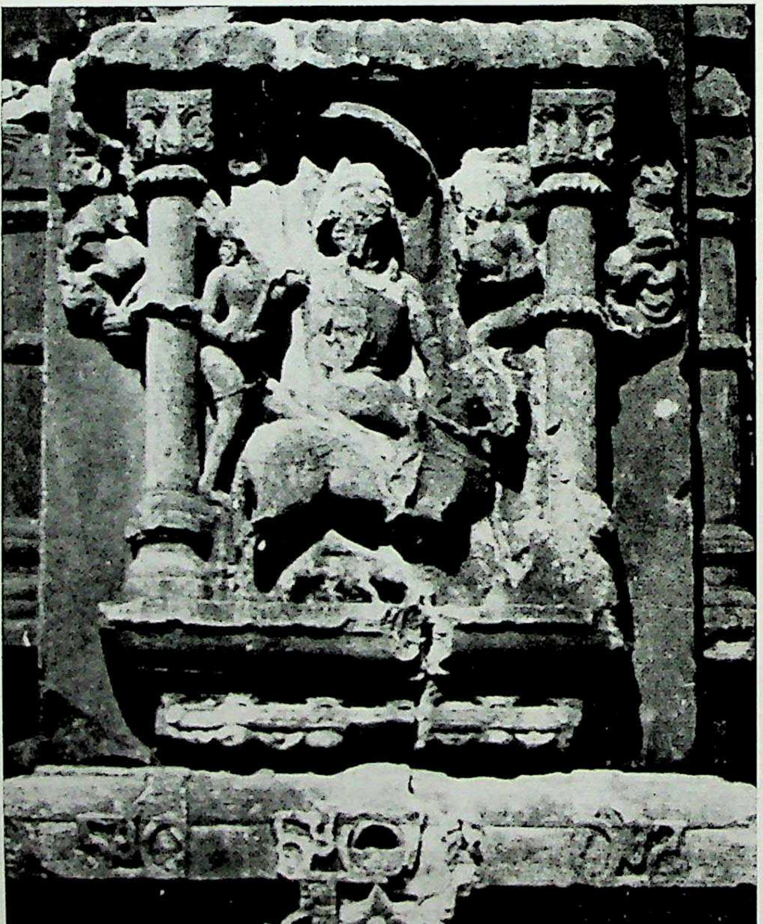

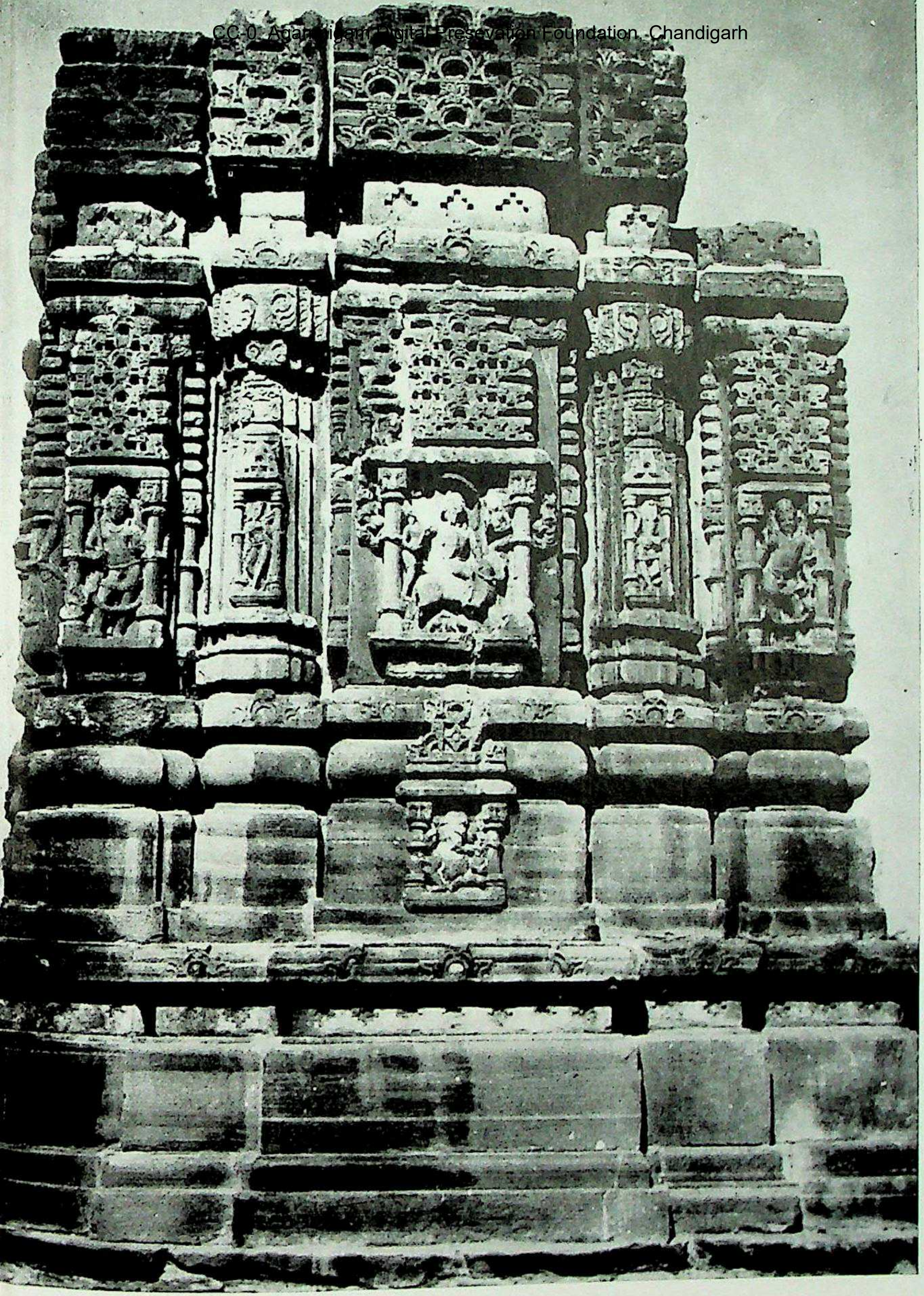

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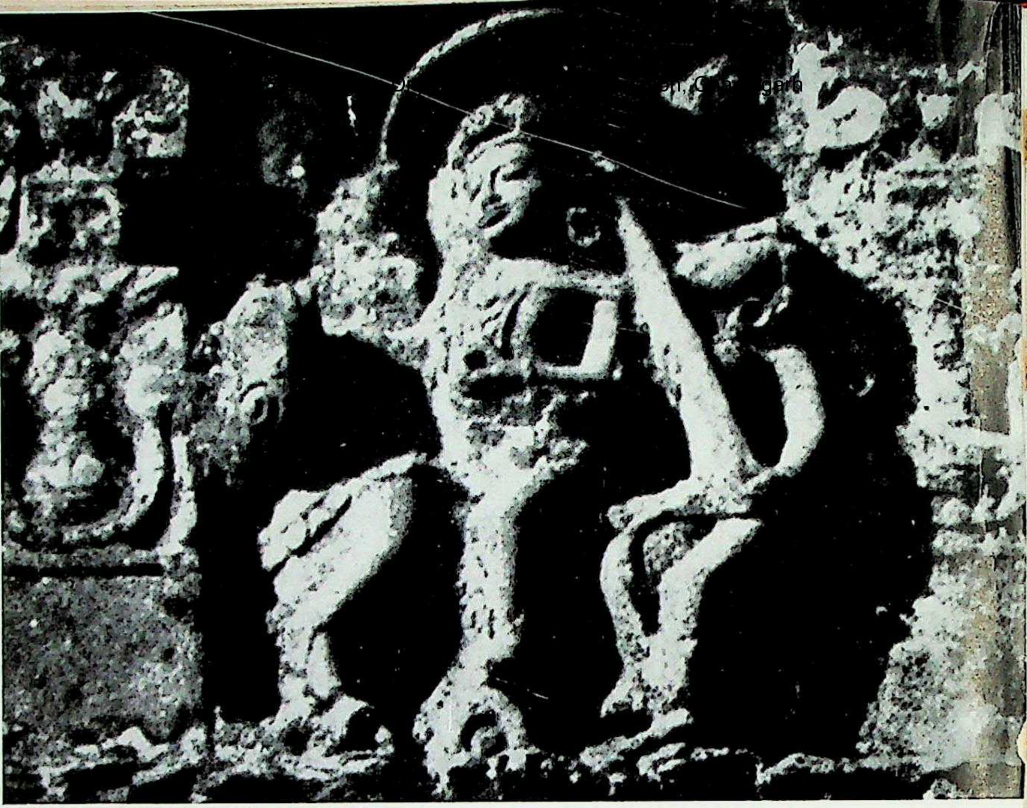

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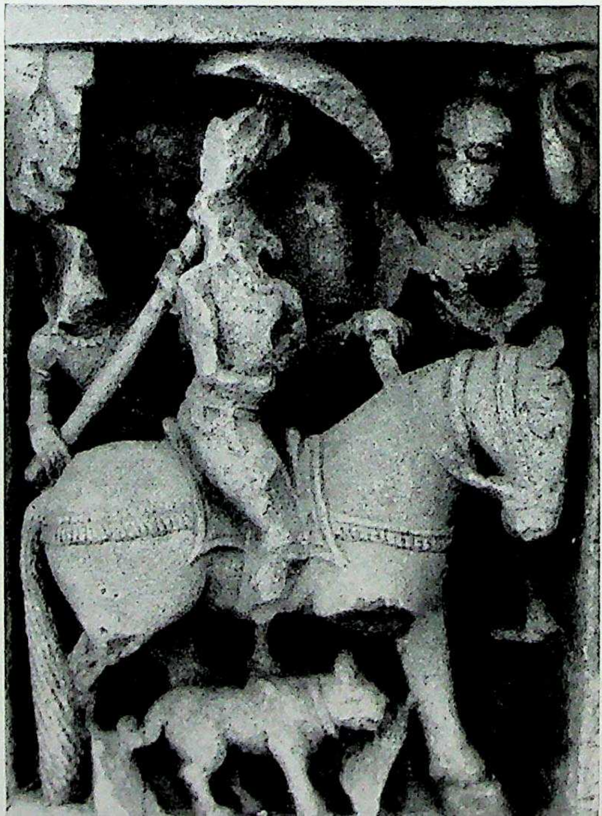

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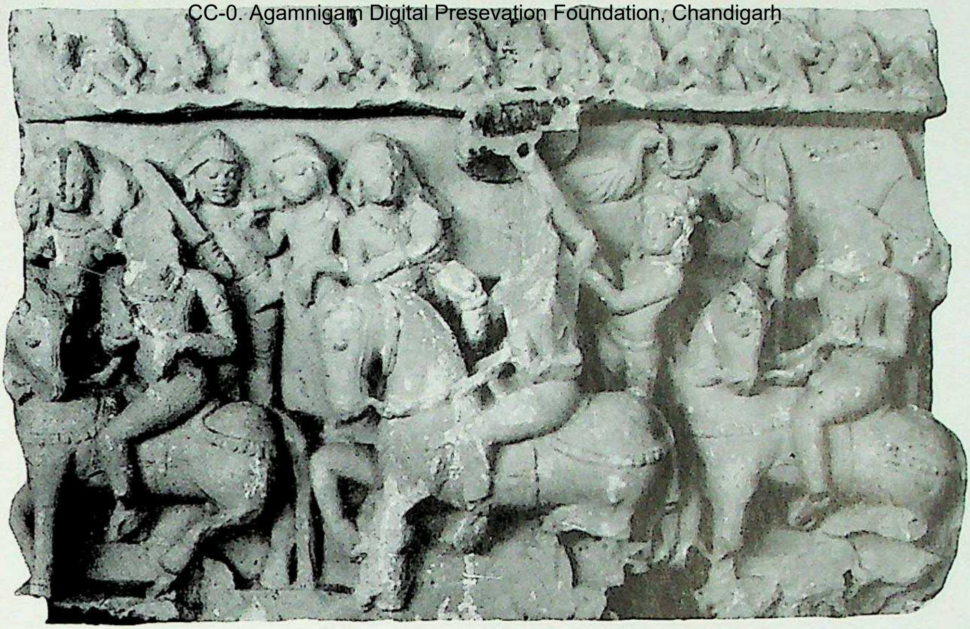

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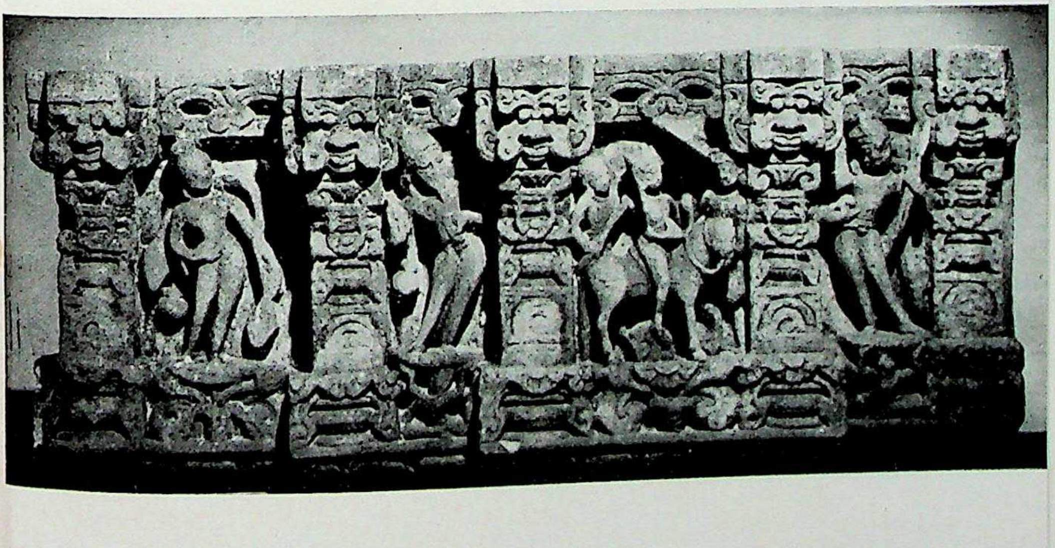

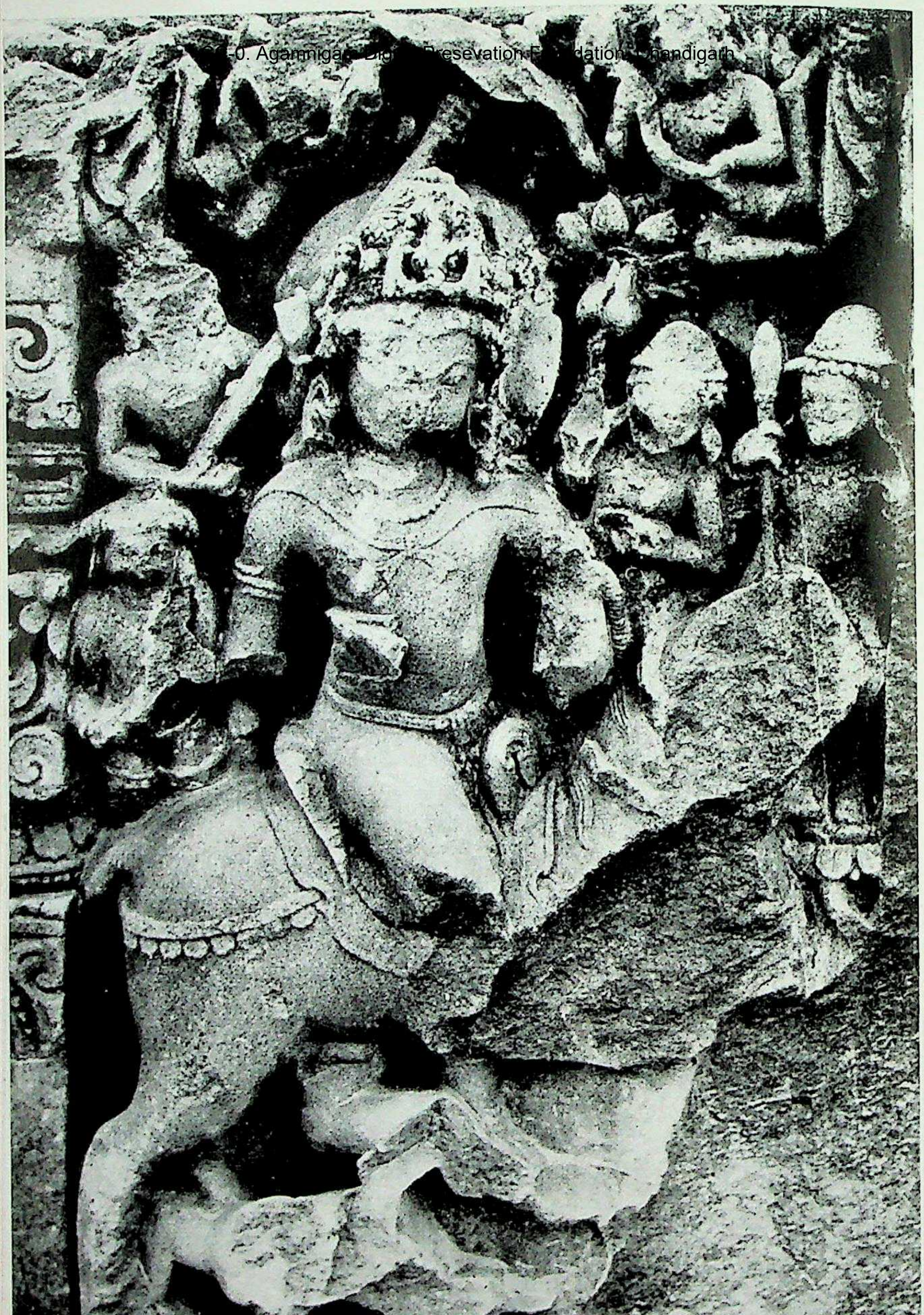

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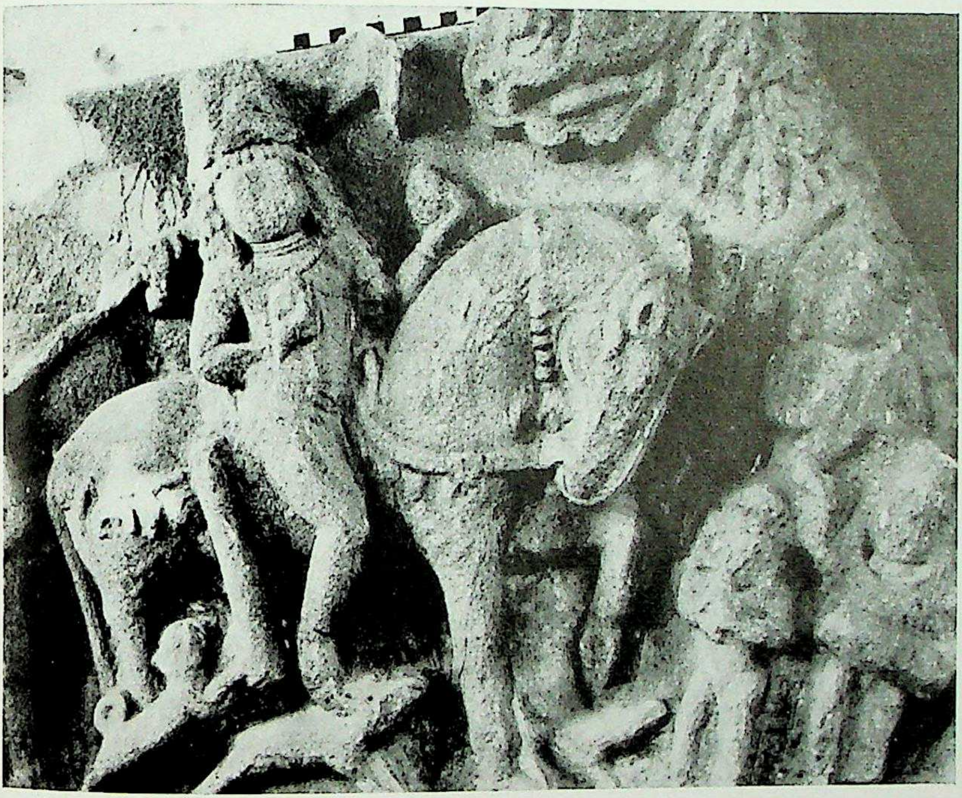

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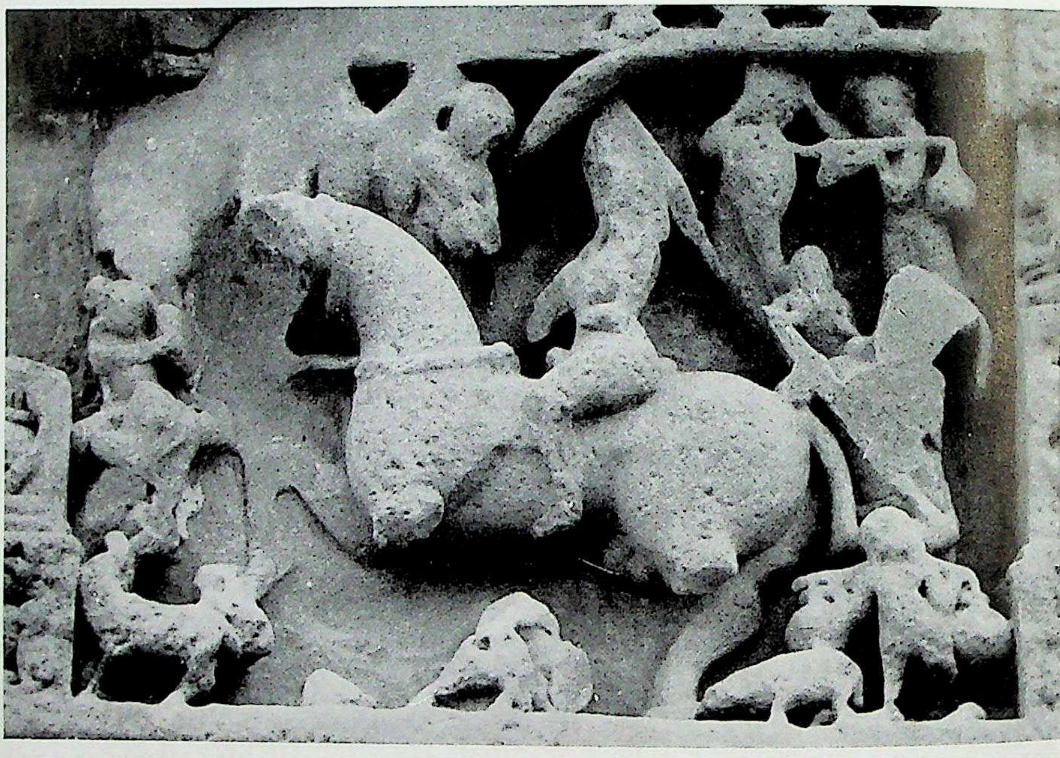

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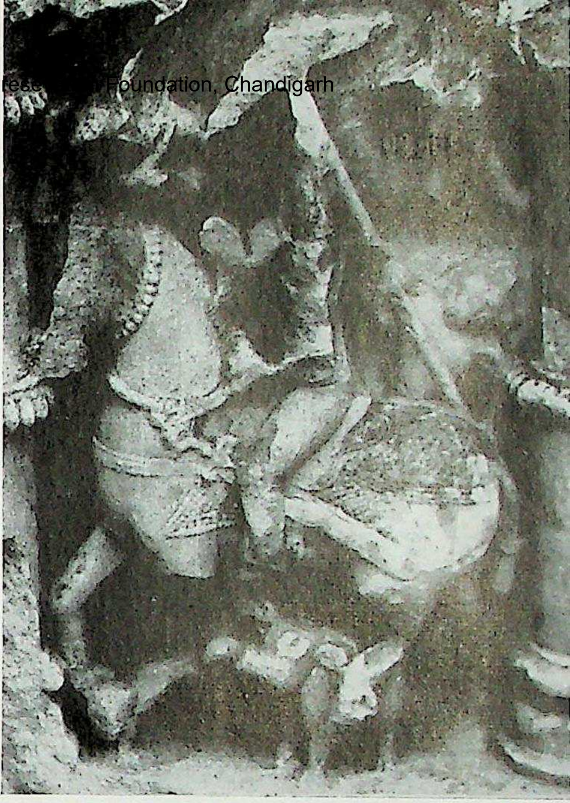

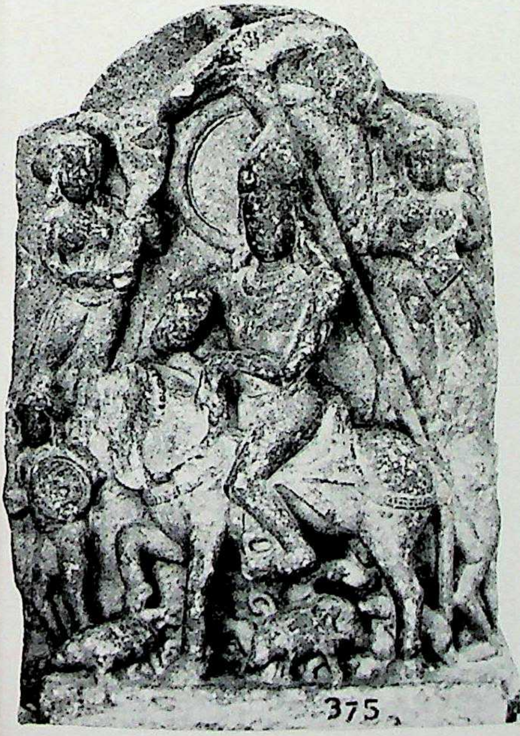

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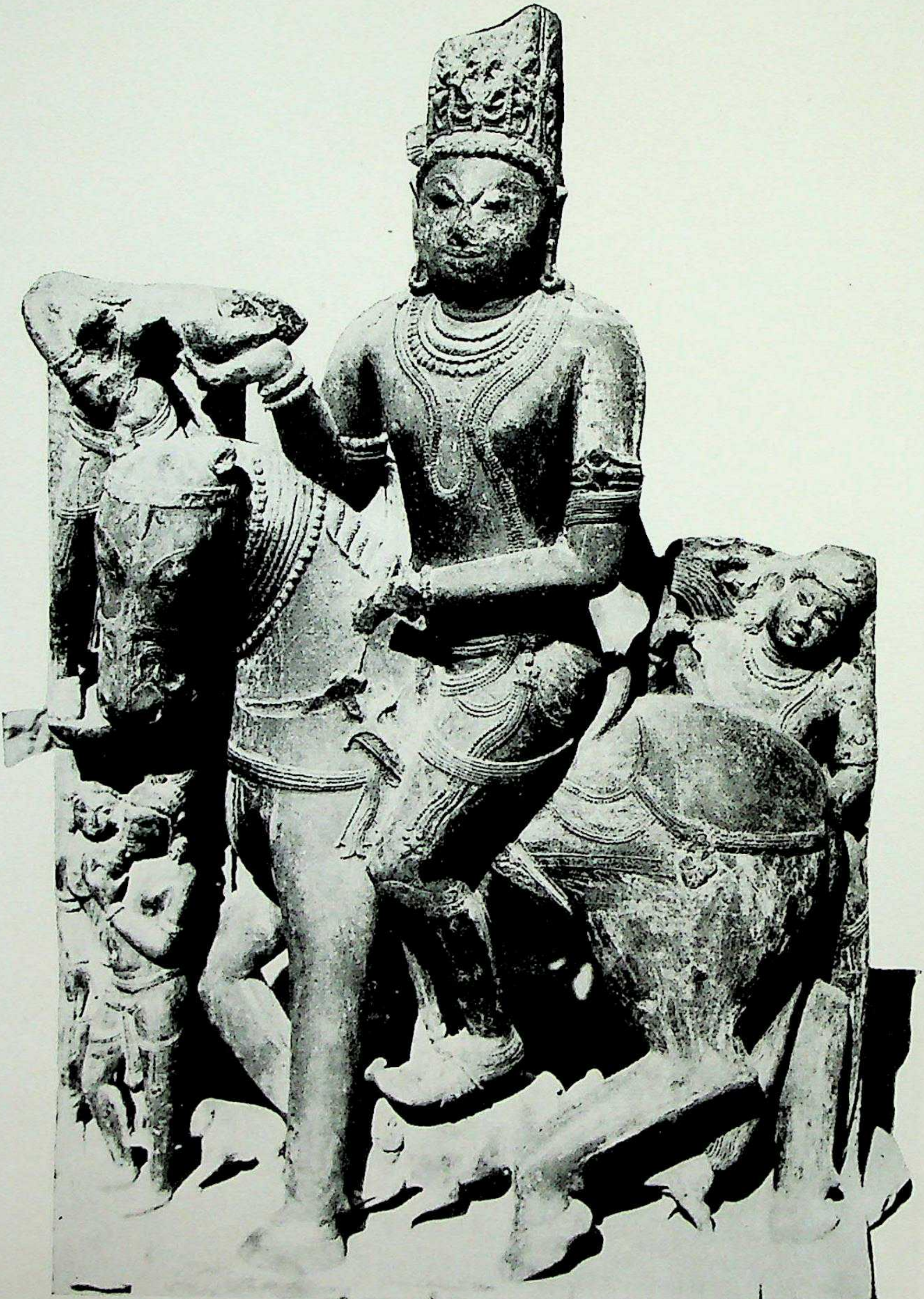

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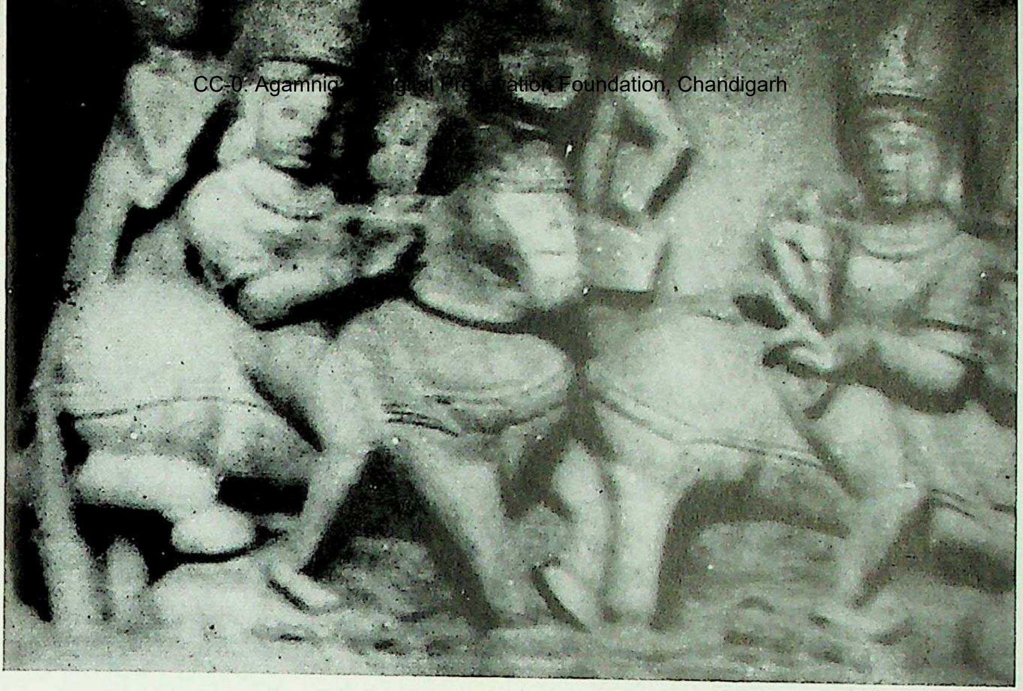

Fig 21

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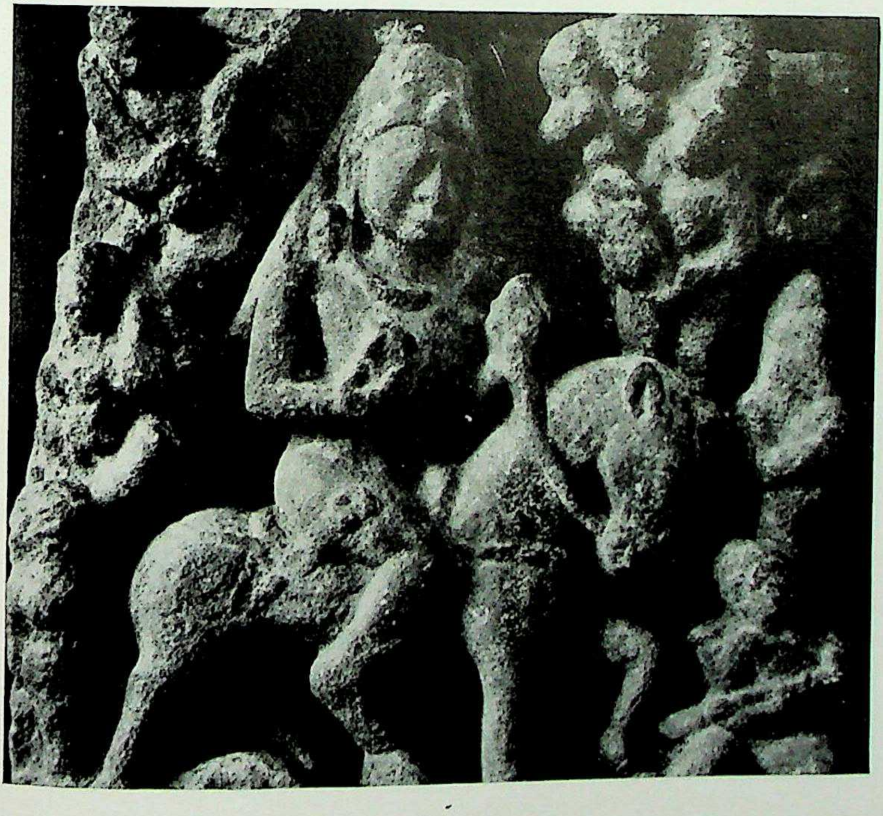

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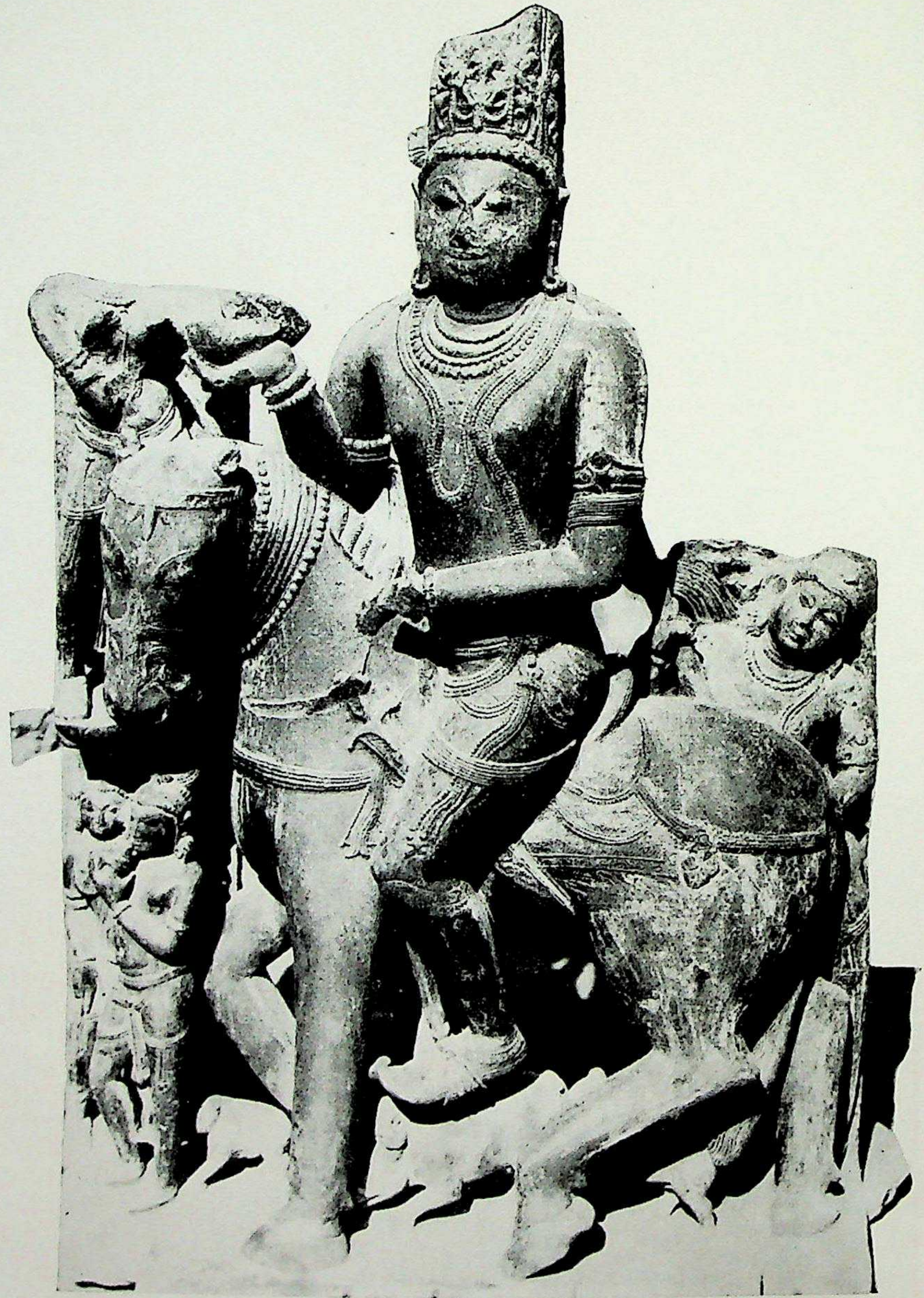

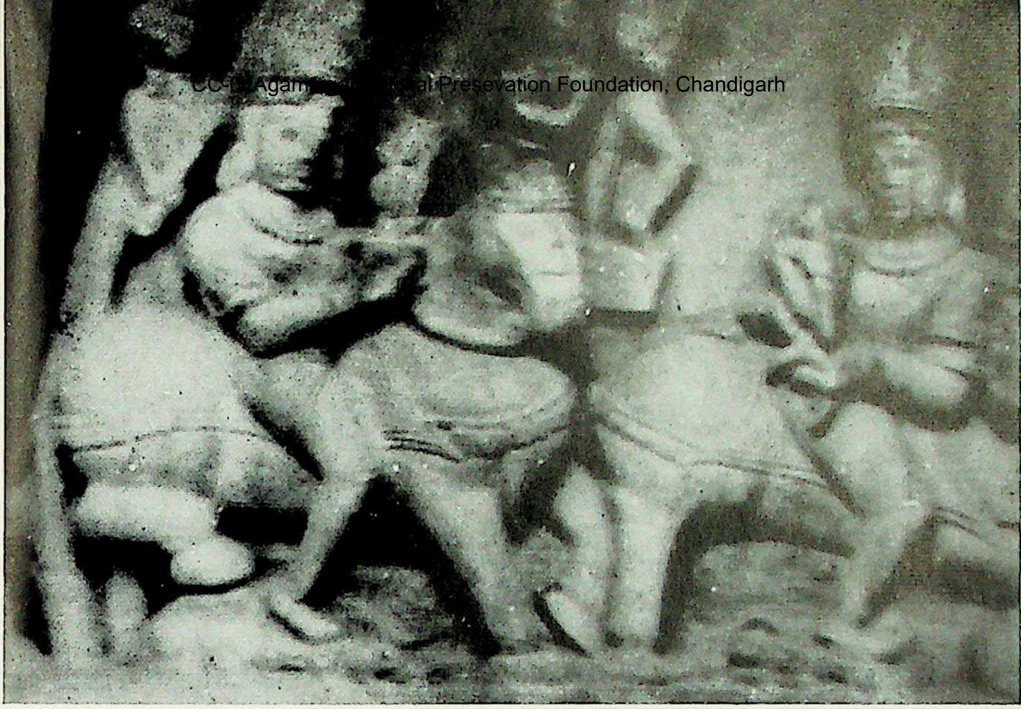

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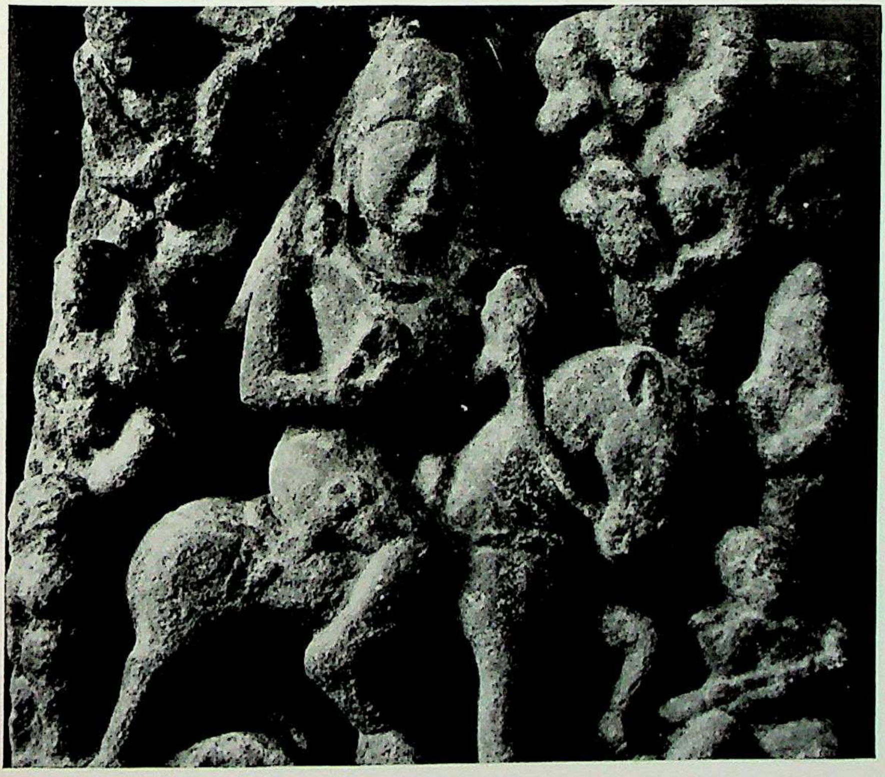

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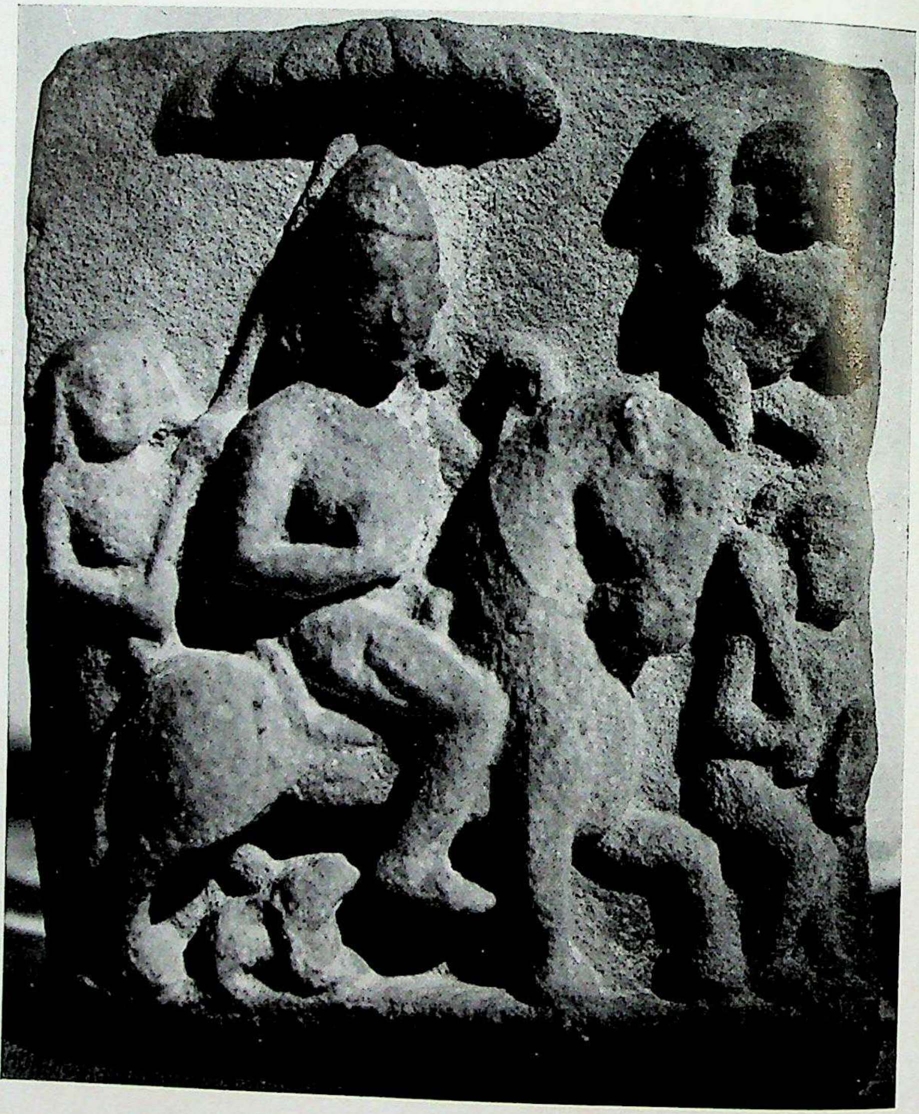

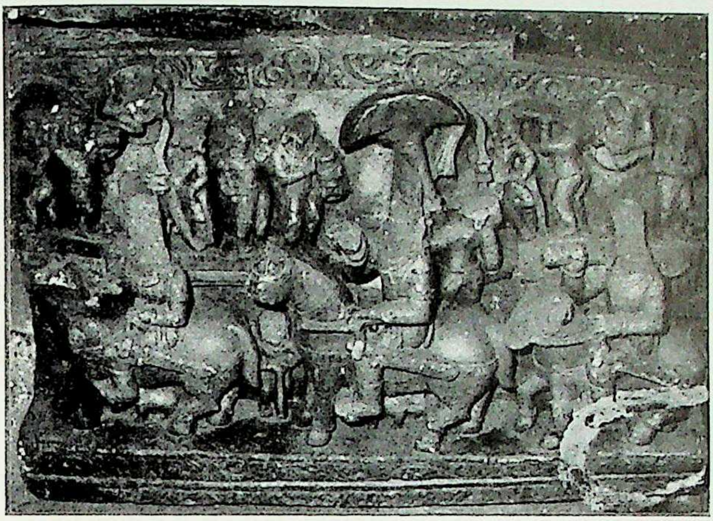

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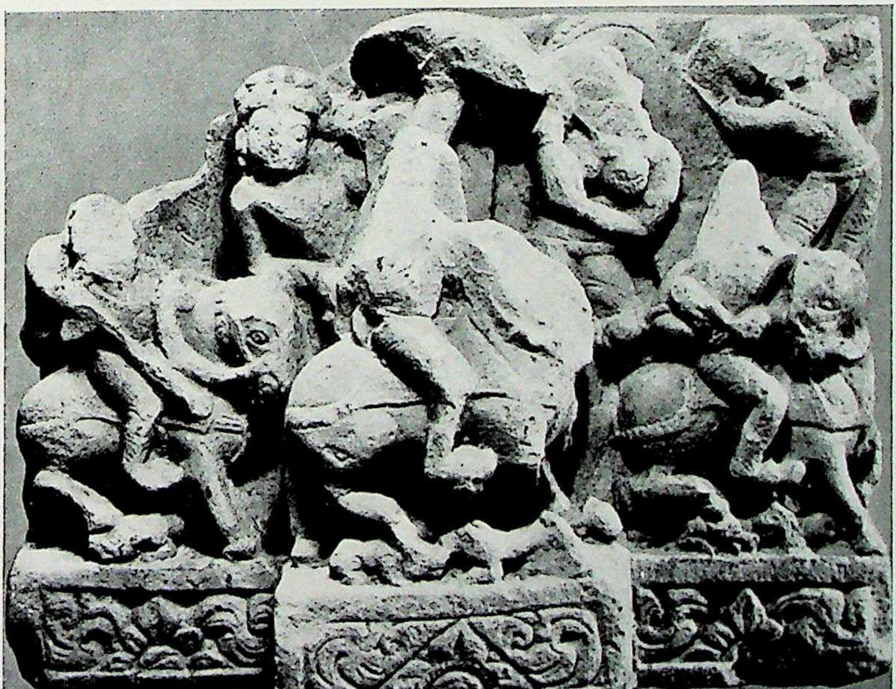

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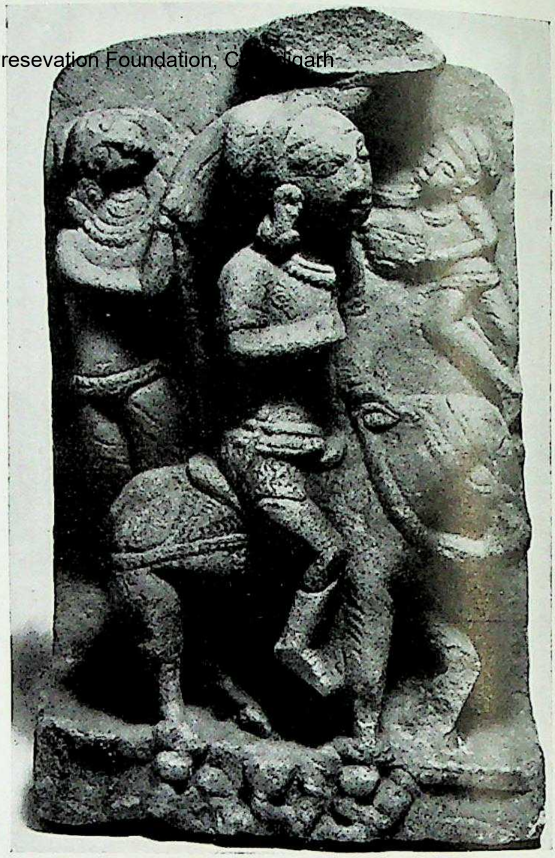

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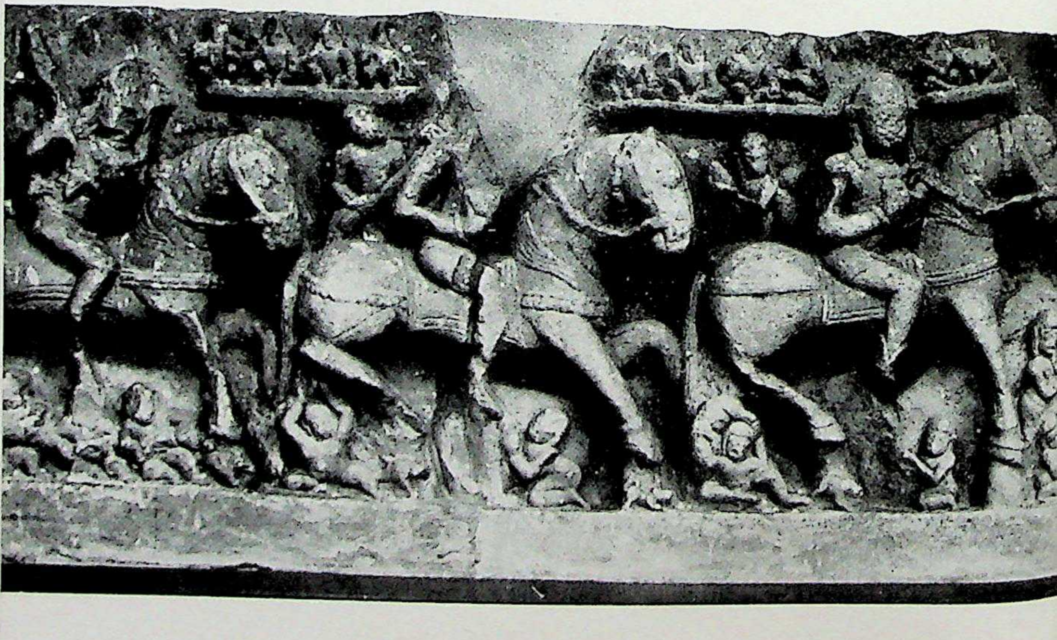

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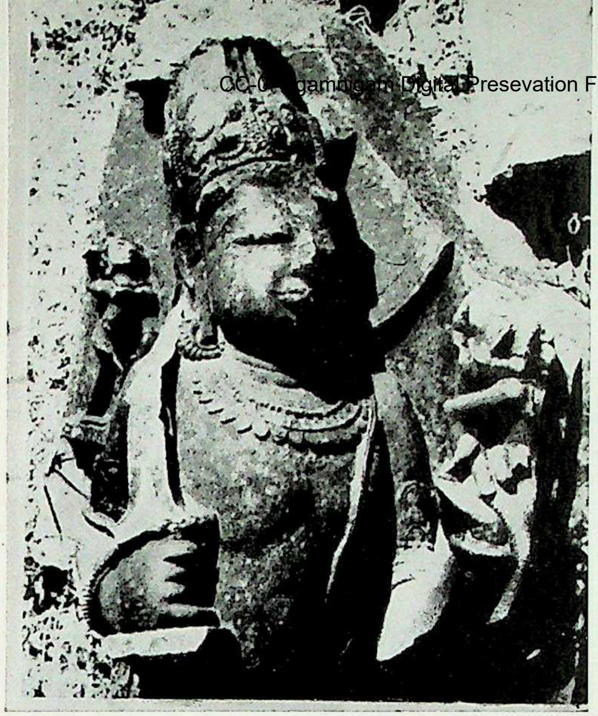

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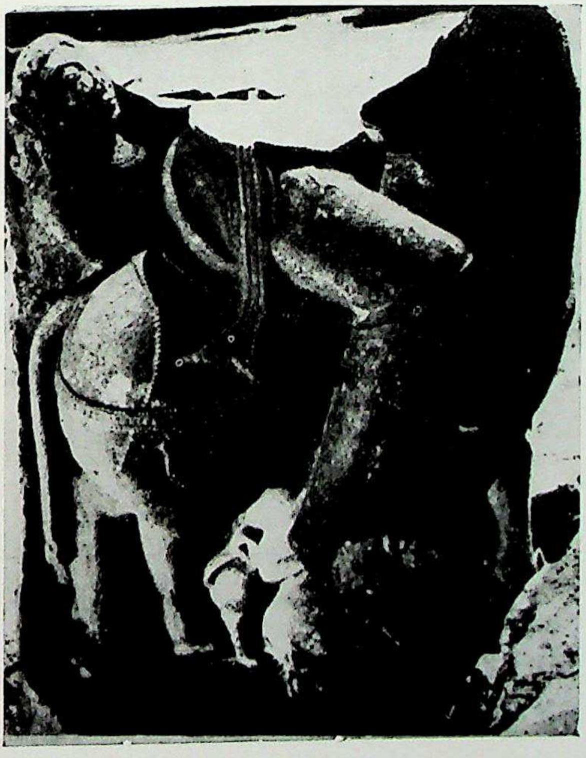

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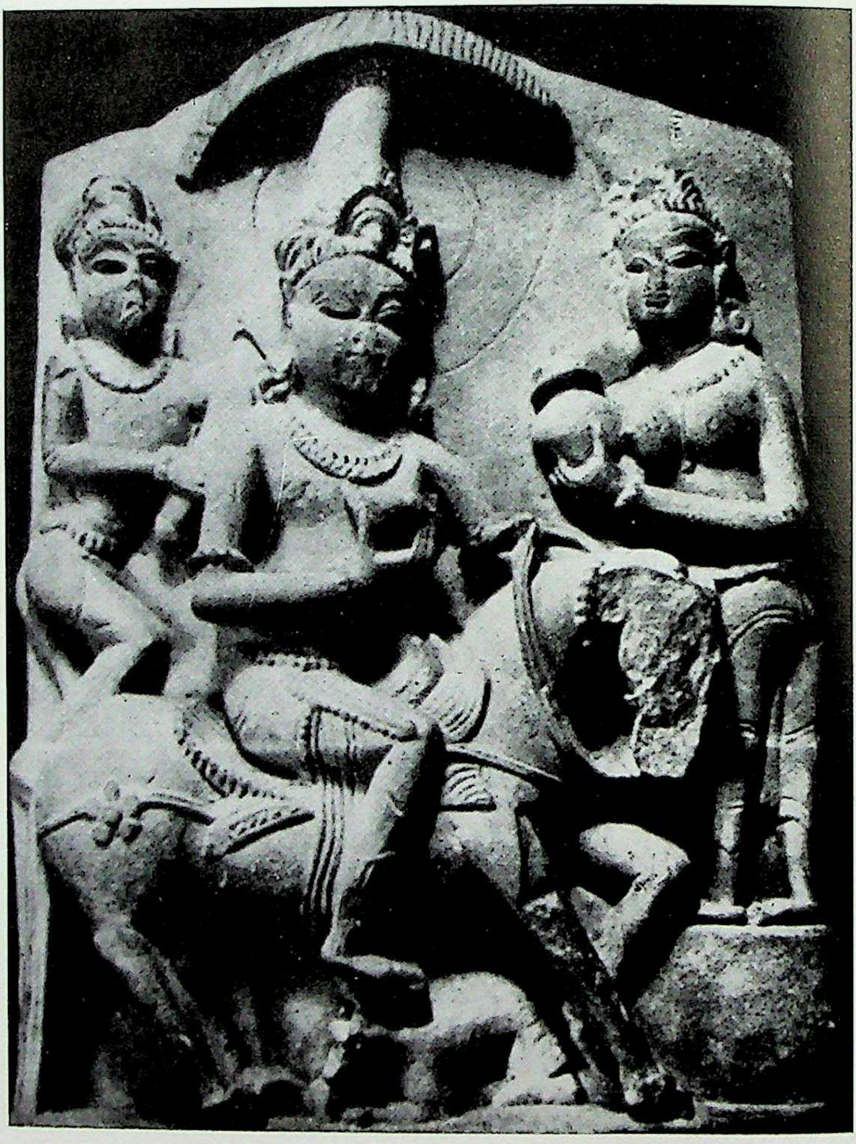

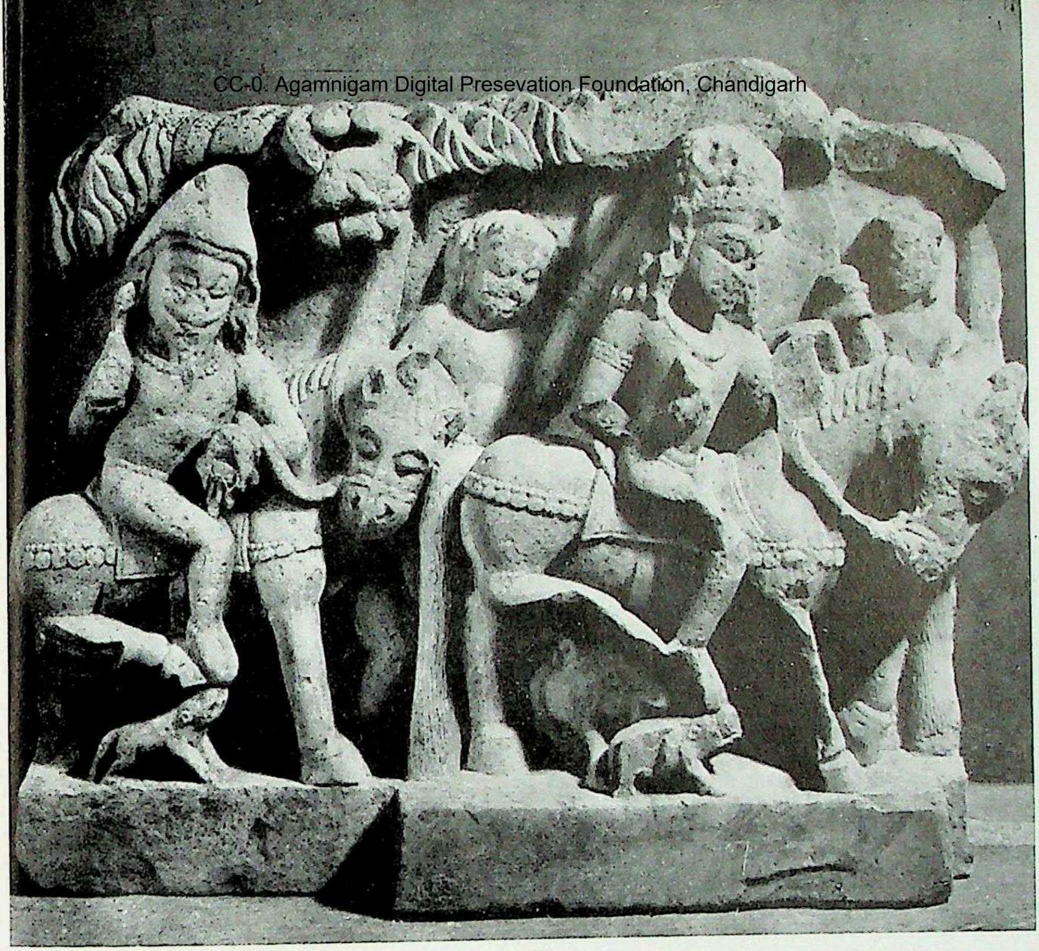

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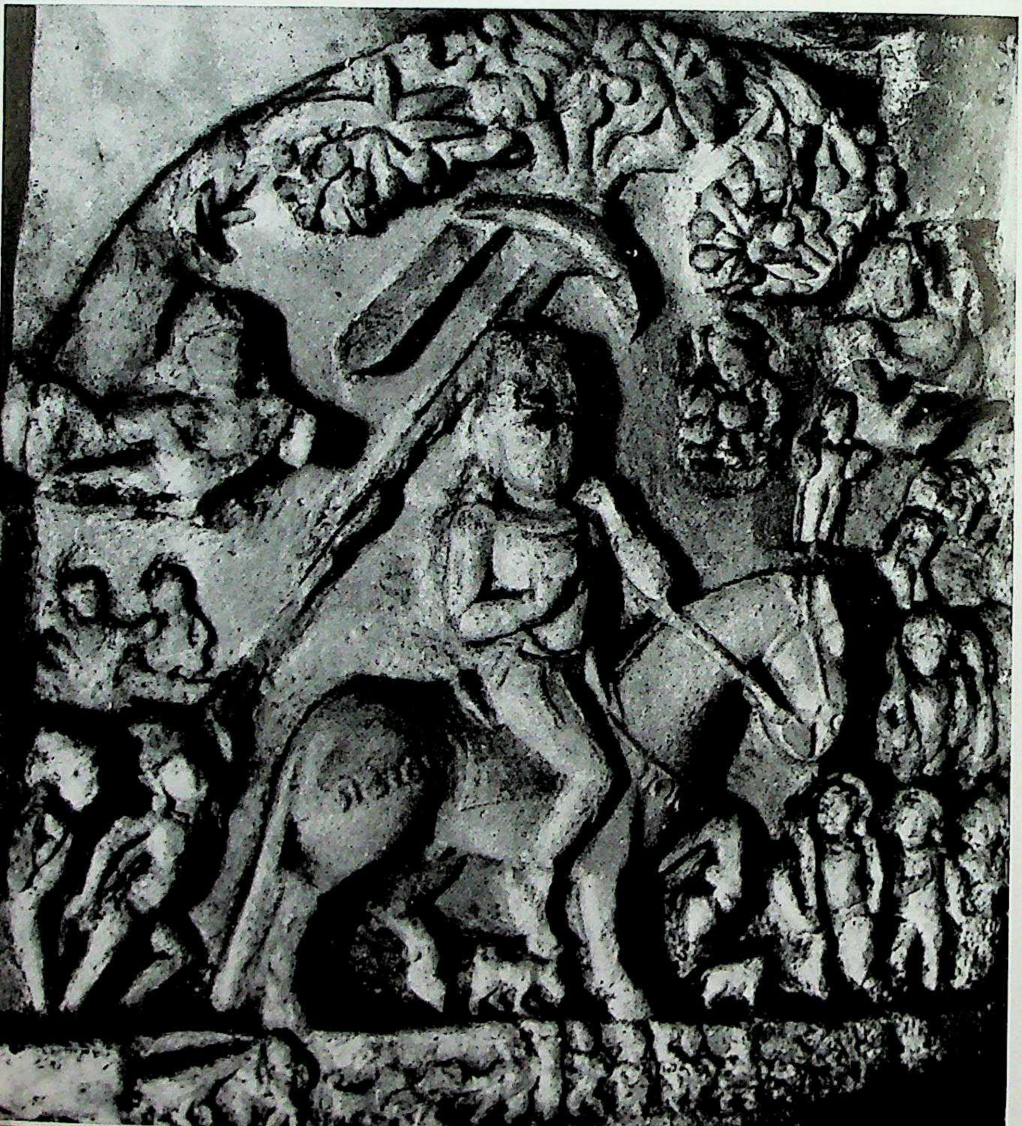

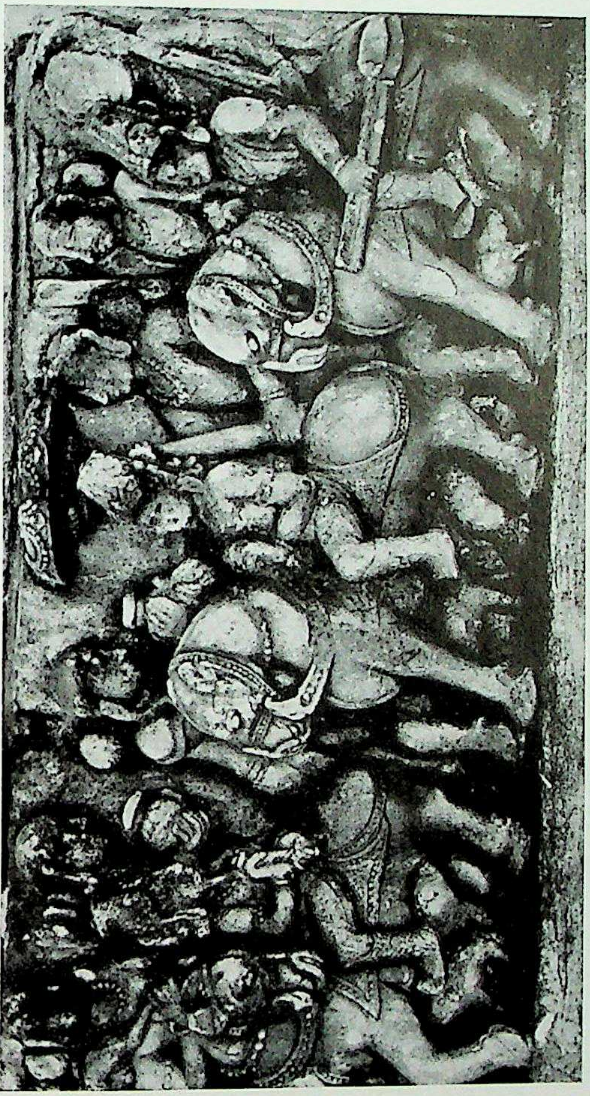

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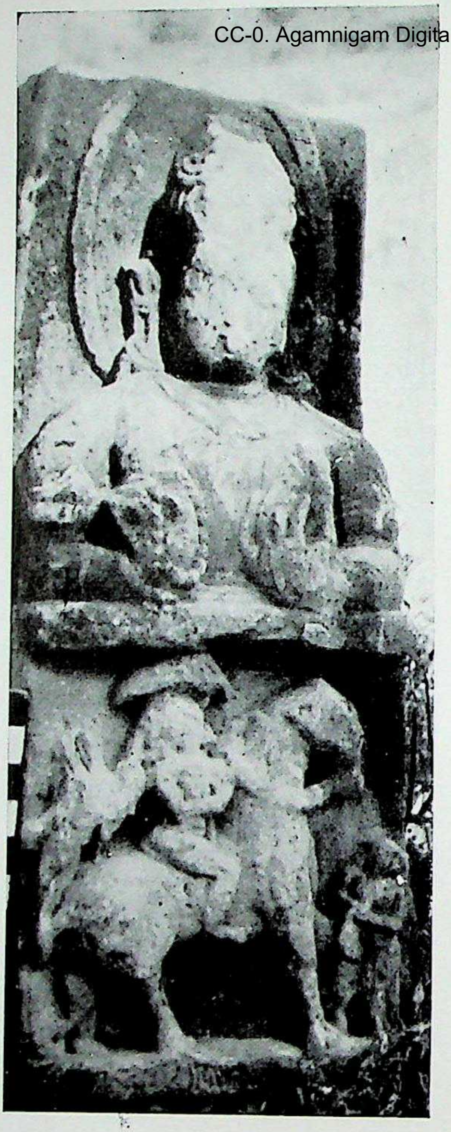

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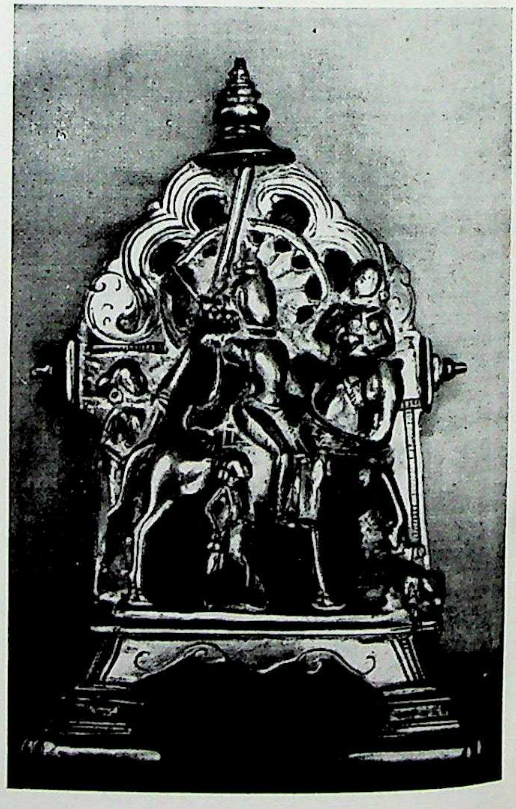

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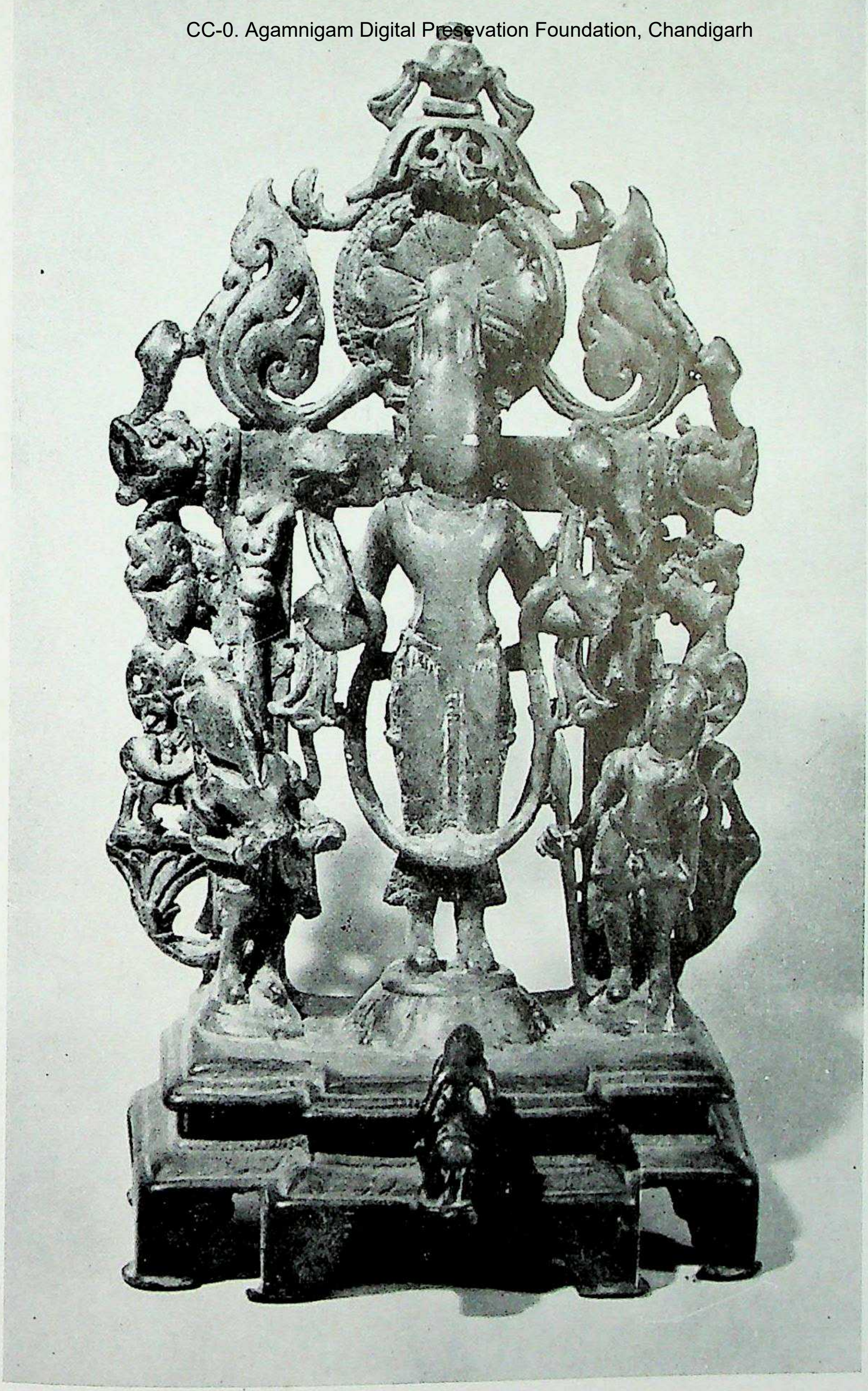

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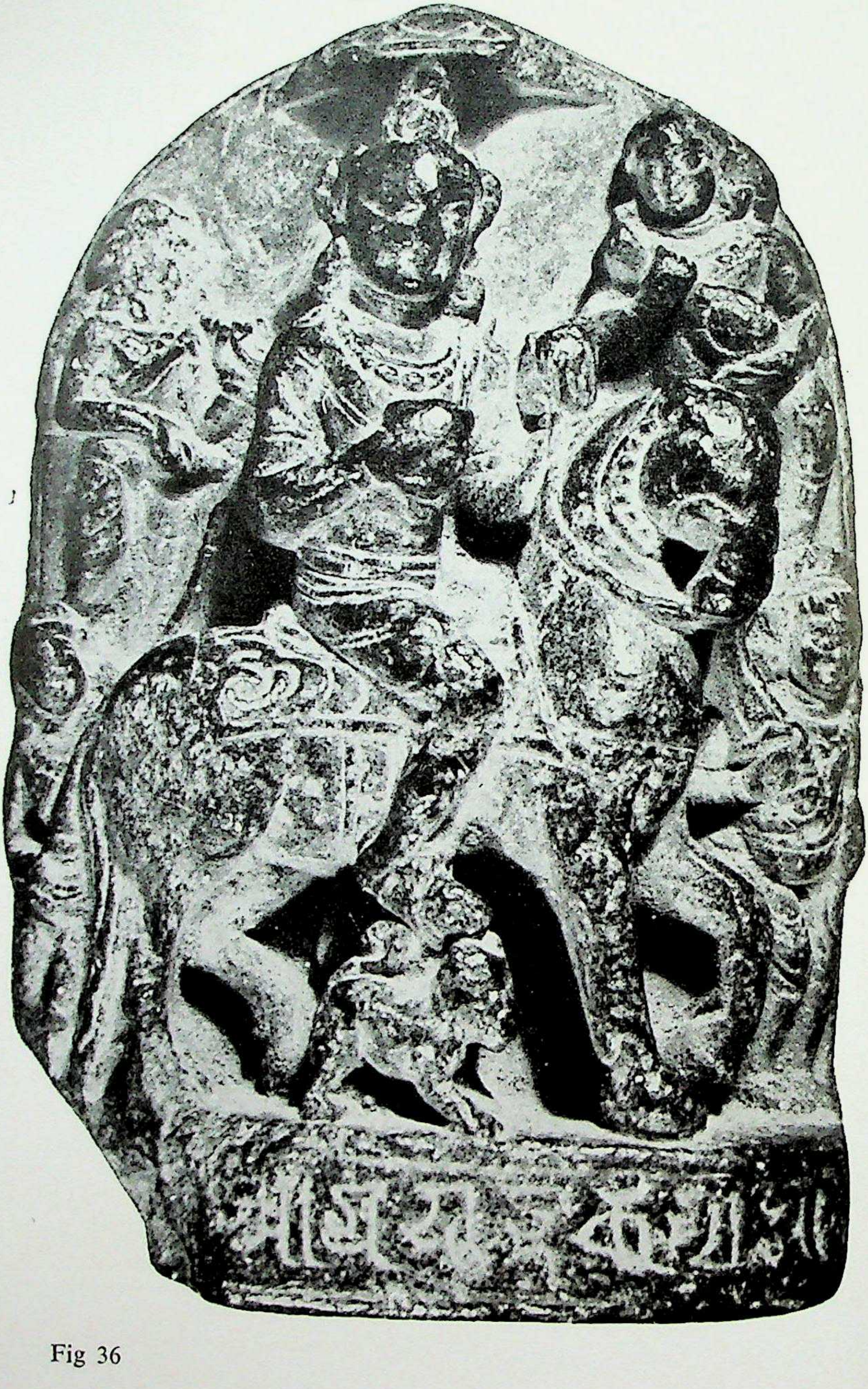

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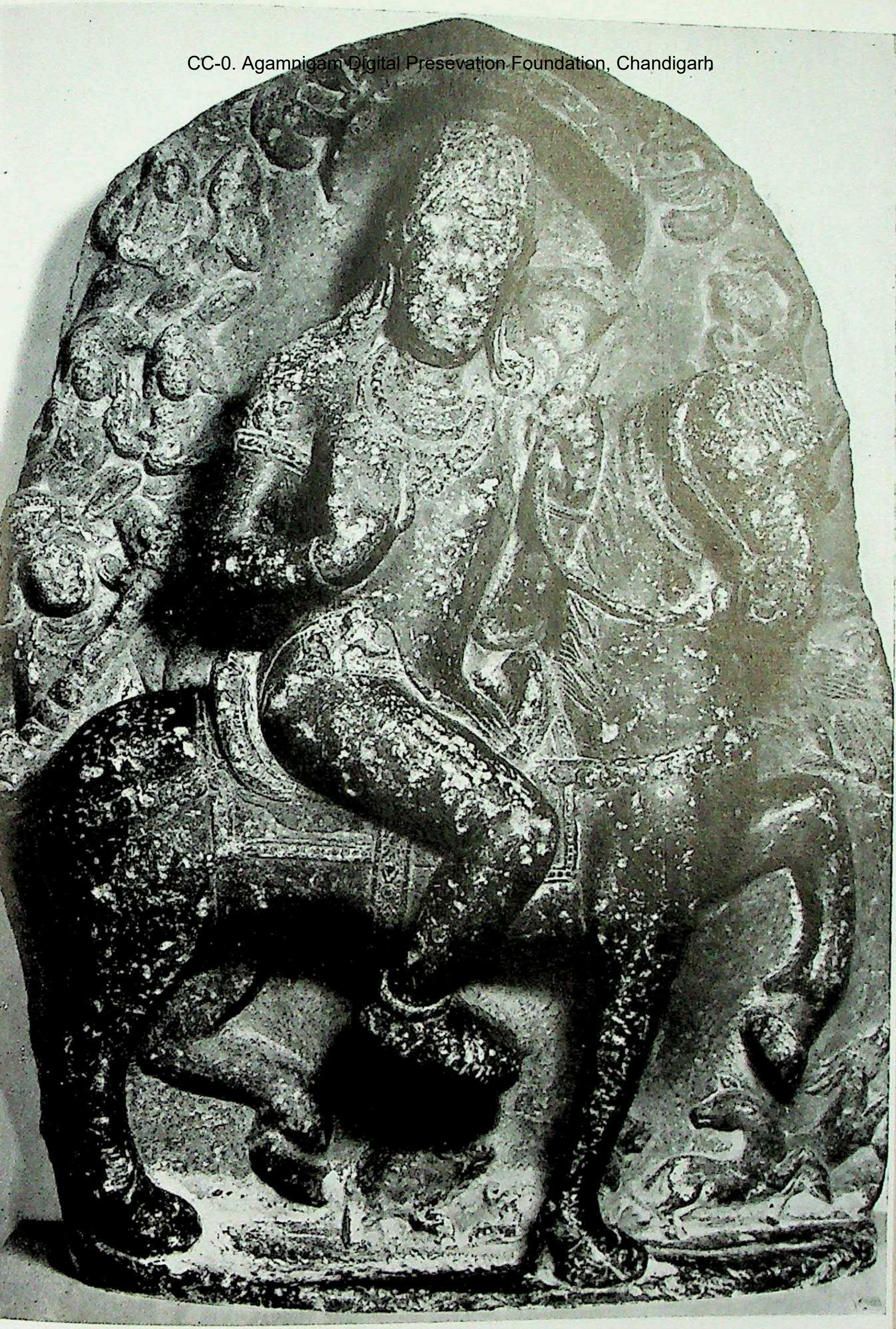

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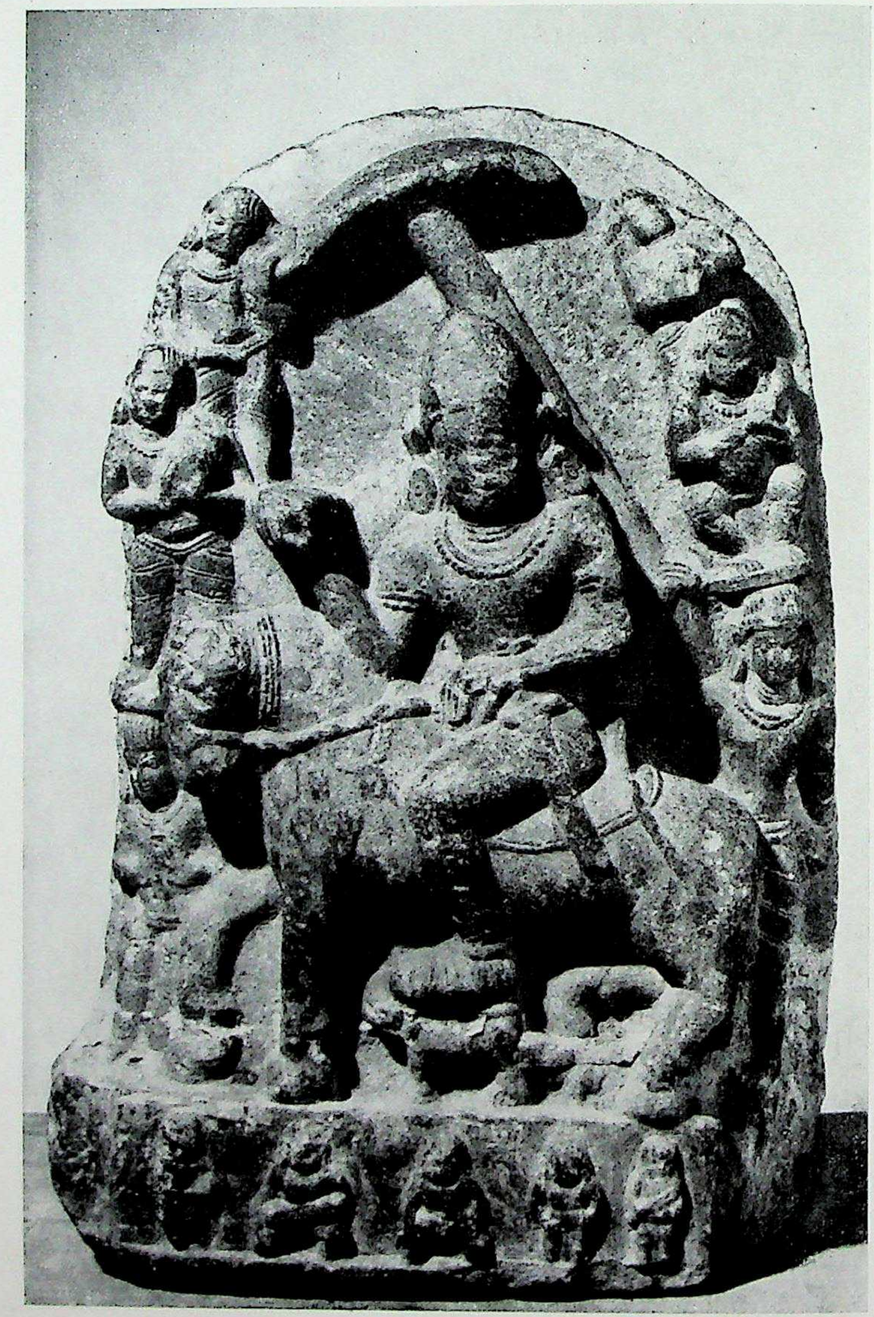

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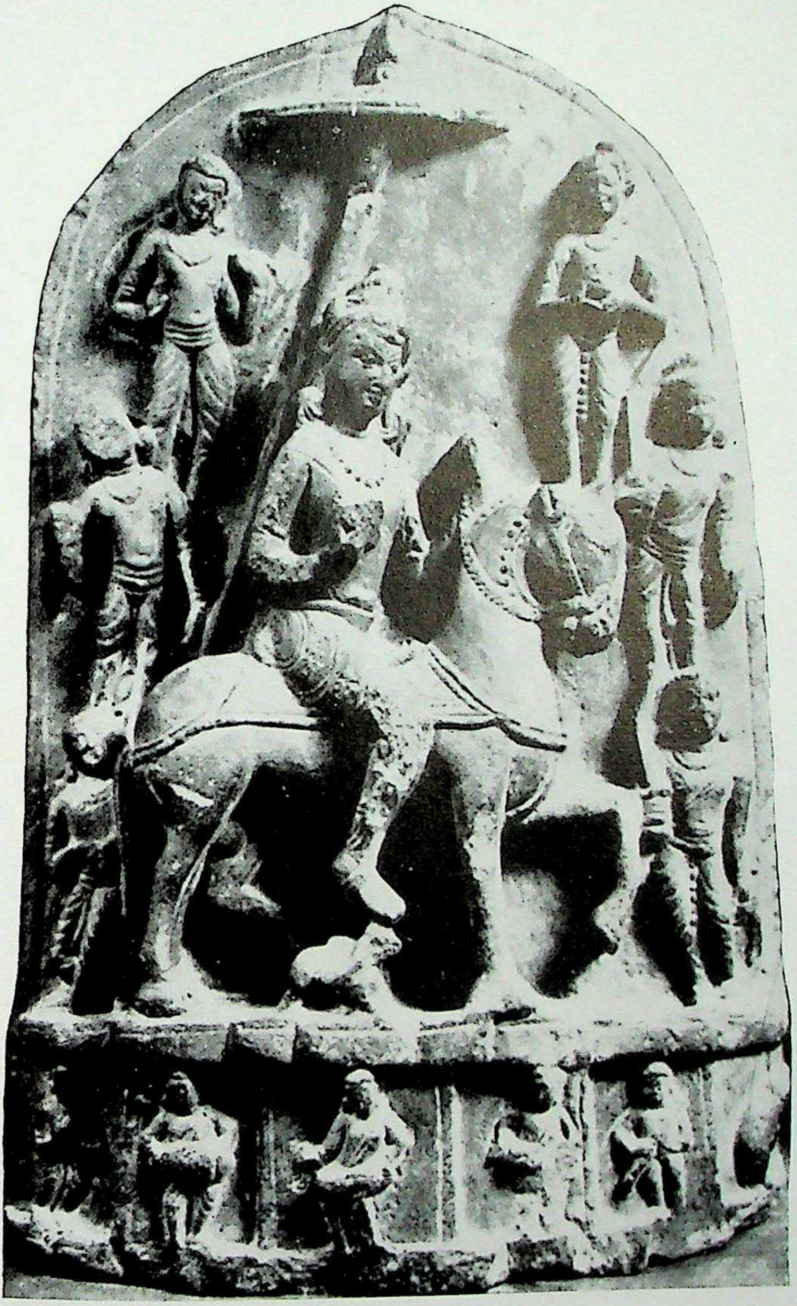

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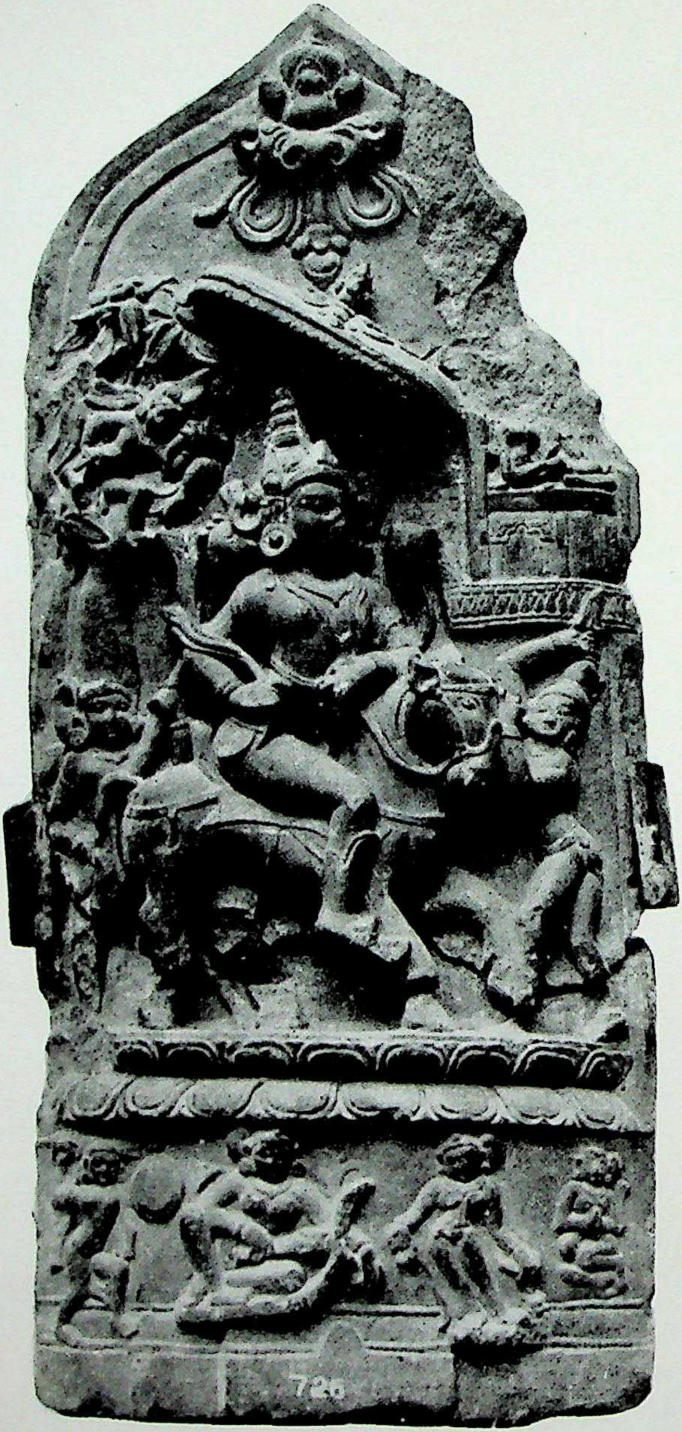

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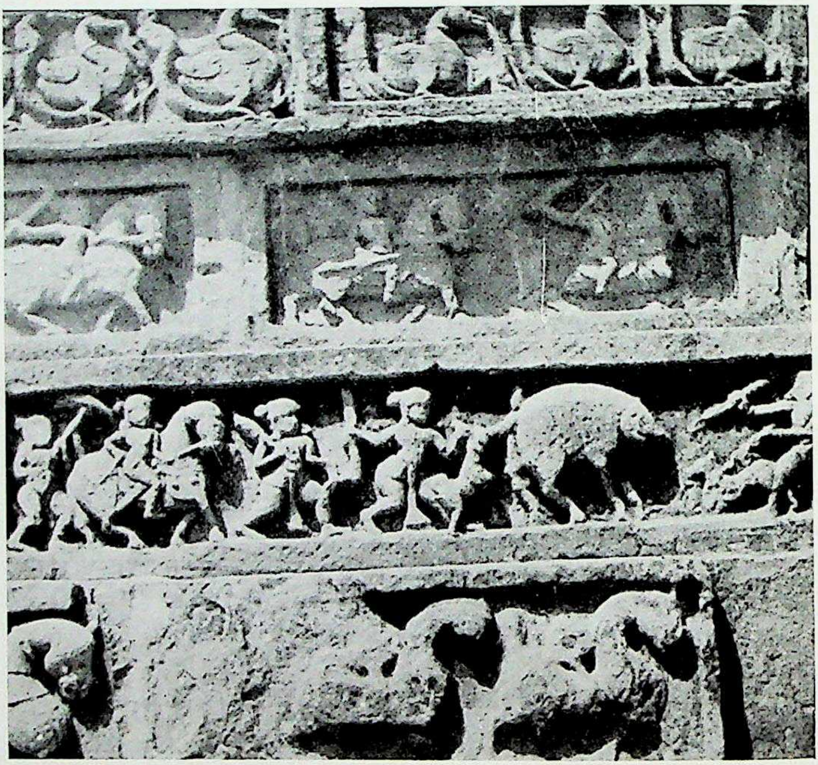

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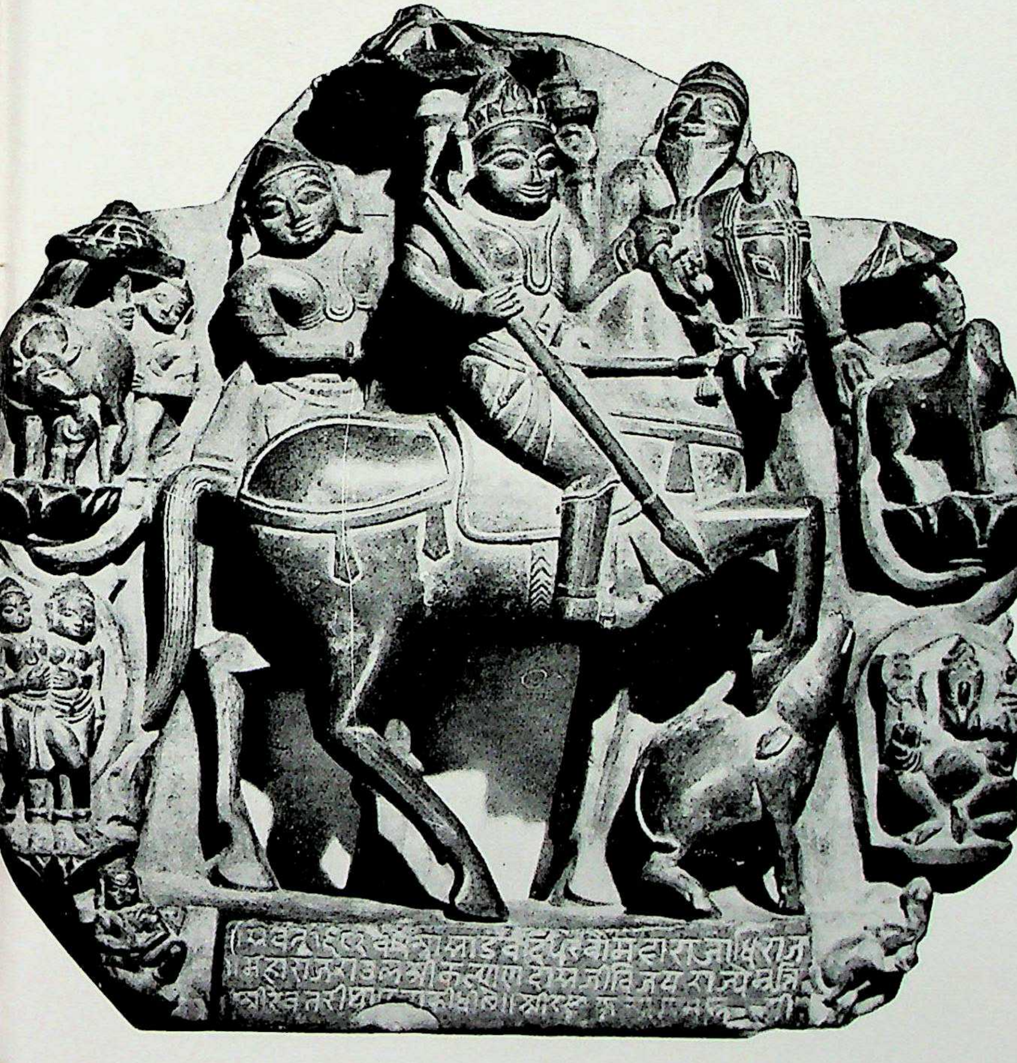

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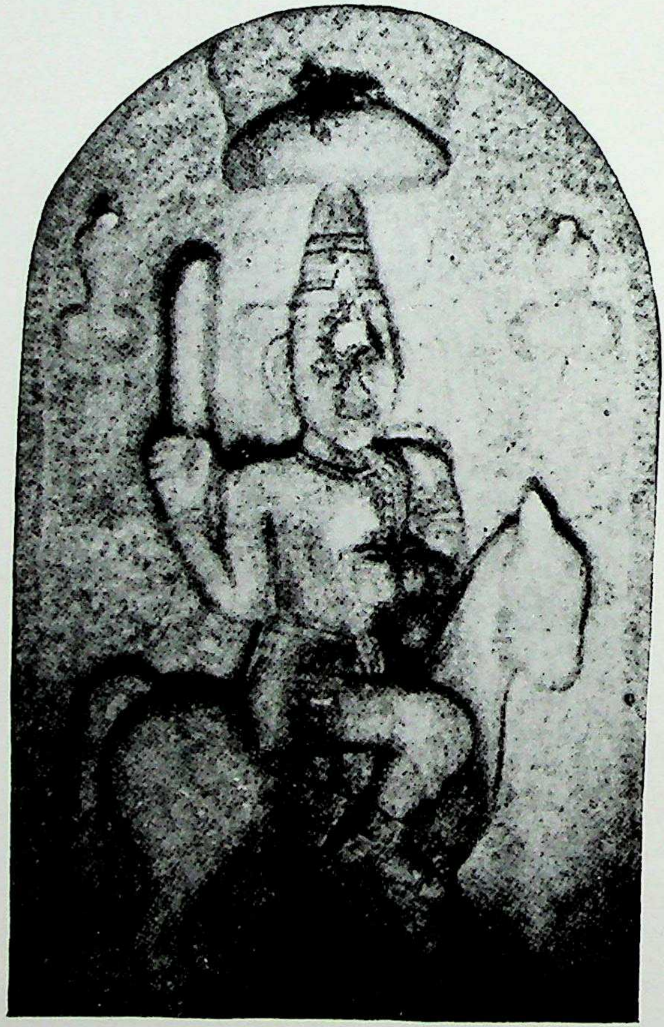

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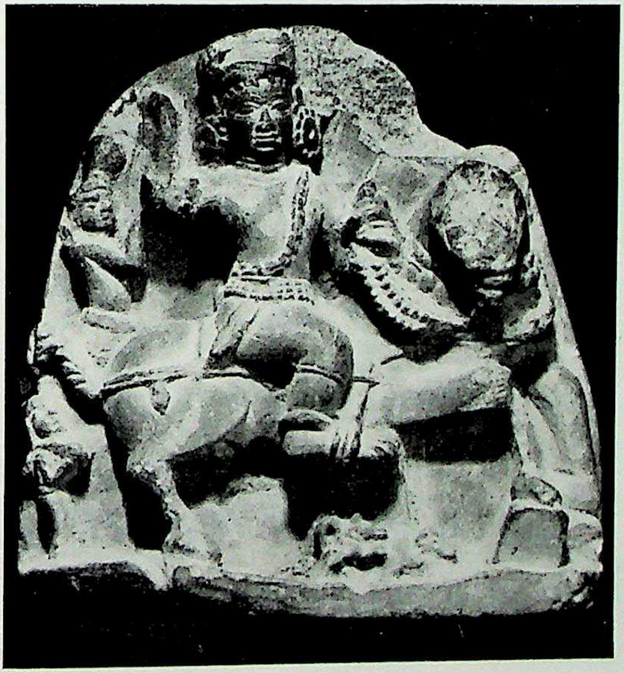

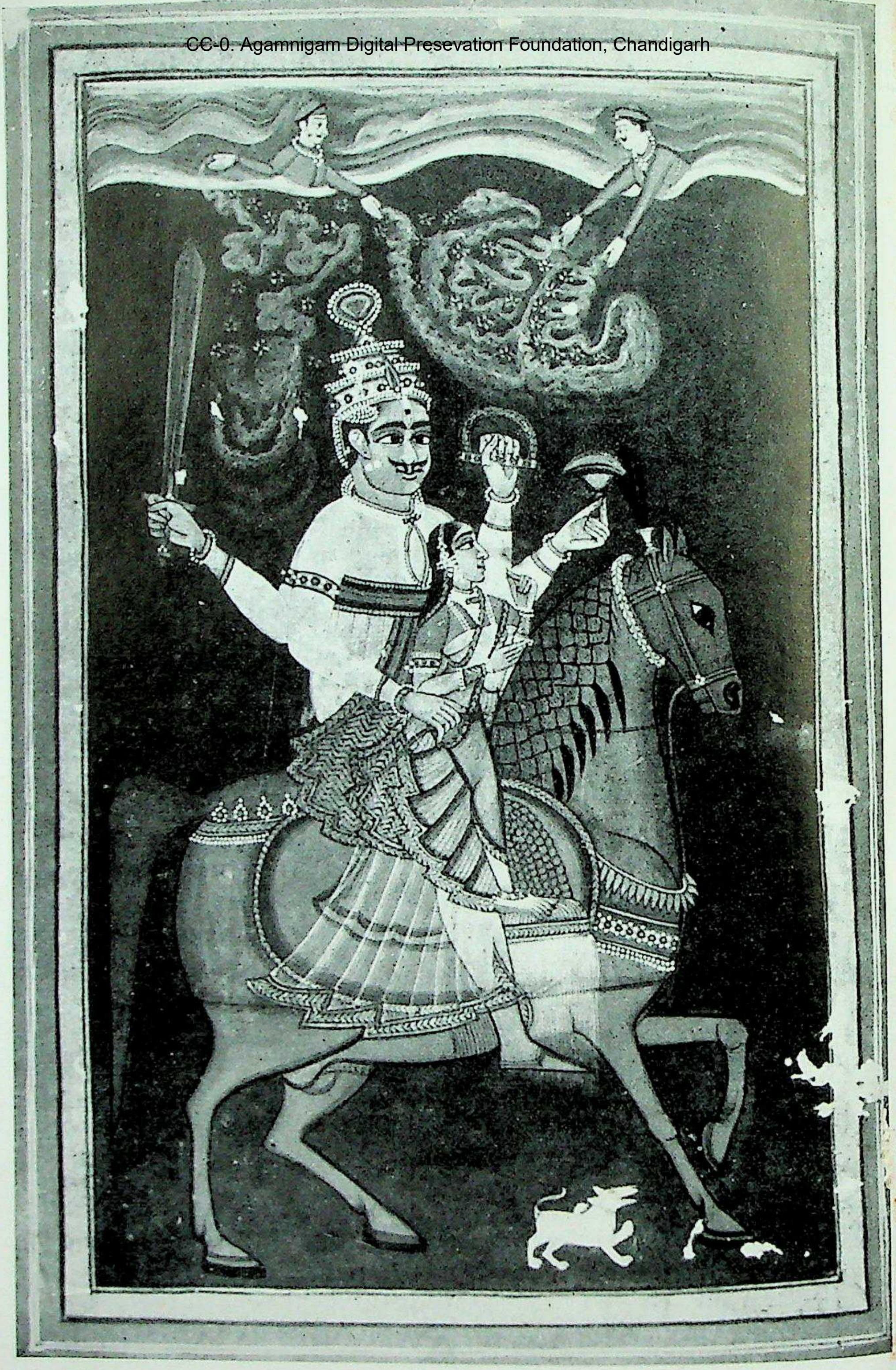

Fig 46

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